THE CARIBBEAN IN TRANSLATION:

REMAPPING THRESHOLDS OF DISLOCATION

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of PhD

University of Warwick

Yesu Persaud Centre for Caribbean Studies

November 2017

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work would not have been possible without the help and support of a number of mentors, advisors and colleagues from the University of Warwick.

I owe my deepest gratitude to my supervisors, Prof. Fabienne Viala and Prof. Susan Bassnett for their encouragements, insightful advice and constant support. In their respective ways, Prof. Bassnett and Prof. Viala have shown invaluable guidance and patience with my work.

This dissertation was made possible by the generous funding of the Yesu Persaud Centre for Caribbean Studies (YPCCS), for which I am most grateful. Additional funding from the YPCCS for a research project conducted in Puerto Rico was key to the development of this work and, I am, here again, very thankful to its members and generous donators for the unique research opportunities they offered me.

Special thanks also go to colleagues from the School of Modern Languages at Warwick, in particular to Prof. Alison Ribeiro de Menezes, for her support as Head of Hispanic Studies and her advice during both upgrade phases. For the second upgrade, I also wish to extend my thanks to Dr Chantal Wright, from the English Department, for her helpful advice. To Dr. Clemencia Rodas-Pérez, Ms. Raquel Navas and Dr Leticia Villamediana González from Hispanic Studies, my warmest thanks for welcoming me in your classes so that I could learn Spanish. ¡*Muchas gracias a todas*!

My warmest thanks extend to all the members of the Instituto de Estudios del Caribe at UPR, Río Piedras, and in particular to Dr. Lowell Fiet, Dr. Humberto Garcia-Muñiz and Nadya Menendez for welcoming me with such generosity in Puerto Rico and for facilitating my stay in San Juan. Thank you to Carlos Roberto Gomez Beras for opening the doors of *Isla Negra Editores* to me and for including me as part of his 'family' in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Thank you to my 'abuela' for reminding me to take notes for my thesis during our coffee rituals. Thank you also to those of you Puerto Ricans who offered me a sense of home and greatly contributed to this work through simple acts of kindness and a sense of solidarity beyond compare.

I would like to express my deepest thanks to my parents for their love, trust and belief in me, and to you, Benoit, for the enduring love, support and beautiful humanity.

DECLARATION

Selected material included in this thesis has appeared in the following publications:

Laëtitia Saint-Loubert, 'Publishing against the tide: *Isla Negra Editores*, an example of pan-Caribbean transL/National solidarity', *La traducción literaria en el Gran Caribe*, *Mutatis Mutandis*, 10, 1 (2017), 44–67.

Laëtitia Saint-Loubert, '(Ré)écritures bifocales: trans-lations et trans-fusions portoricaines dans les autotraductions de Rosario Ferré et Esmeralda Santiago', *Auteurs-Traducteurs: l'entre-deux de l'écriture* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Paris Ouest, forthcoming).

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to investigate how works by Anglophone, Francophone and Hispanophone Caribbean writers circulate in translation. The texts under study include allographic translations as well as cases of self-translation. Caribbean texts and their translations are analysed through the prism of the threshold, which offers a multi-faceted entry point into key themes and aspects of Caribbean literature as well as into translational strategies. When discovering the Caribbean in and through translation, readers experience the crossing of multiple thresholds, be they topographical, cultural, linguistic or imaginary. The dual nature of the threshold, which both opens into and signals a limit, heralds movement and continuity on the one hand, but also invokes potential resistance on the other hand.

Departing from the semiotic approach adopted by Genette in his seminal study on paratexts as 'thresholds of interpretation', this work seeks to examine thresholds as strategic sites of negotiation for translators. Their visibility, in particular, is associated with forms of trespassing that tease out the concepts of authority and originality. When it comes to Caribbean writing, thresholds are presented as ambiguous sites of opaque revelations, a view that contrasts with a more traditional understanding of paratext as a space aiming towards (absolute) clarification of the text. Rather, liminality is presented as favouring acts of subversion whereby Caribbean writing emerges as a literature that manifests constant (re)appropriations and generates renewed (af)filiations for the region.

Problematic crossings are also explored to reveal that thresholds act as enclaves of cultural resistance where Caribbean literature is concerned. Here, Caribbean untranslatabilities are investigated as a feature of the region's fragmentary nature, which, once turned into a poetics of translation based on reciprocal hospitality, offers possible routes of access to a pan-Caribbean cultural memory. Further analysis of translational paratexts as sites of reparation not only seeks to dislocate classics such as Césaire's *Cahier* away from corrective manipulations of the text, it also aims to relocate Caribbean writing within a tradition of transculturation and creolization. Here, acts of self-translation expose the importance of self-legitimacy for those Caribbean writers who decide to adopt a bilingual approach to their writing, and raises the issue of whether or not any form of Caribbean writing that circulates on a global scale ultimately becomes a product of translation.

The last sections of the thesis argue in favour of alternative models of circulation for Caribbean literature, in which translation is conceived as a series of archipelagic crossings that generates new coordinates for transoceanic solidarities. In turn, re-thinking translation from the perspective of Caribbean ecologies allows us to present a translocal approach to cultural circulation.

Introduction: Genette's "thresholds of interpretation" at a crossroads

Il n'y a de seuil qu'à franchir.[1]

Thresholds are meant to be crossed. Such is the conclusion that Gérard Genette reaches in his seminal work *Seuils*, translated by Jane E. Lewin as *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*. The English title explicitly connects liminality with elements found outside a literary text, while also investigating the notion of subjectivity in the reading experience. Although Genette does not concentrate on paratext found in translation, he hints at this gap in his concluding remarks:

> 'La première [catégorie non étudiée] est la *traduction*, en particulier lorsqu'elle est plus ou moins revue ou contrôlée par l'auteur, comme le fit Gide avec Groethuysen, pour la version allemande des *Nourritures terrestres*, et à plus forte raison lorsqu'elle est entièrement assurée par lui, selon l'usage constant d'un écrivain bilingue comme Beckett, dont chaque traduction doit, d'une manière ou d'une autre, faire commentaire au texte original.'[2]

Here, Genette refers to specific types of translation in which the author is either co-translator or self-translator, a comment which posits that authorial authority should inform paratextual practices in translation. In other words, translators should only be visible and appear in the margins of the text when they have been granted permission to do so, or when they benefit from a certain status, as is the case when author and translator are one and the same person. In fact, paratextual elements such as footnotes supposedly mark the translator's unfaithfulness towards the original, as Genette suggests: 'Mais un commentaire à utiliser avec précaution, car le droit à l'infidélité est un privilège auctorial.'[3] Yet, prefaces, footnotes, glossaries and afterwords come in various shapes and sizes, particularly when it comes to the translation of works which Paul Bandia refers to as 'postcolonial intercultural writing'.[4] In his study of postcolonial African literature,

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[1] Gérard Genette, *Seuils* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987), p. 376.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 372.
[3] *Ibid*.
[4] Paul F. Bandia, *Translation as Reparation: Writing and Translation in Postcolonial Africa* (Manchester and Kinderhook: St. Jerome Pub, 2008), p. 3.

Bandia notes the new attitudes of Western publishers towards the representation and marketing of the Other, arguing that heavily present, hence thought-to-be disruptive paratextual elements have all in all been replaced by more subtle, seamless strategies: 'Foregrounding or flanking a word by an explanation or what can be called an in-text, or interlinear, translation has gradually become the preferred strategy over footnotes and glossaries, as the latter can sometimes become highly intrusive informational digressions with the undesired effect of turning the novel into an anthropological reference.'[5] It seems, therefore, that Genette's classification of thresholds finds some limits in the field of translation studies, or, rather, that it further stresses the supposed invisibility with which the translator has long been associated with respect to his/her ancillary practice, thereby pointing to a gap that needs to be addressed.[6] This study will thus reassess Genette's framework within a translational context, offering a foray into a field that the French theoretician has touched upon and yet not grappled with, to highlight how paratexts as 'thresholds of interpretation' shed further light on strategies observed in linguistic and cultural transfers. This initial repositioning of thresholds will in turn be reappraised within a Caribbean setting, in an attempt to investigate the validity of Genette's definition as a satisfying yardstick by which to measure not only literature from the West Indies, but also the larger realm of the Caribbean in translation. The notion of thresholds will therefore be relocated not only on a textual (micro) level, but will also be redefined within a larger scale, in relation to the circulation of Caribbean literature translated for global and local or regional audiences.

Thresholds come in various guises, but their primary function remains to open up into a text, operating as an entrance or a doorway, thereby suggesting movement and the possibility of a progression, alongside a stepping into another spatial reality. When they refer to a literary work, thresholds point to those elements in a book that allow access to the text, that present it not only in the sense that they introduce the work, as Genette reminds us, but also to the fact that they literally and physically make the text a reality, a

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 109.
[6] Lawrence Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader*, 3rd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2012).

tangible entity in the world.[7] As such, the preface – 'l'instance préfacielle' in Genette's terminology – is of prime importance, as it inscribes the text within a certain context for the reader, while also framing it. As a matter of fact, the preface is at least half as much about the information it provides on the text, as it is about the strategies it deploys to present it in such a way that the reader feels privy to the recesses of the text. A certain sense of intimacy thus resides in this liminal, literary space, recalling the privilege a guest may feel upon entering someone's private, domestic sphere. Yet, the preface, or its derivative forms (introduction, foreword, afterword…), whether it has been written by the author or a third party, is always there to guide the reader.[8] Far from being anecdotal, let alone neutral, thresholds therefore partake in specific strategies, all the more astute and coded as they obey specific rhetorical rules when it comes to prefaces. Genette argues that the original (authorial) preface is the expression of a *captatio benevolentiae*, a rhetorical device consisting in obtaining the reader's goodwill. What does this entail, then, when the author is replaced by the translator who then decides to use a preface as a site of expression to introduce the text, but also to reflect on their own craft and position themselves within a complex dynamics of apparent modesty and self-assertion? To what extent does this liminal space grant authority to the translator whilst making the promise of a new alliance, a new pact with the reader?[9] How can a preface serve as a site of reflection on translation and its ethics when it gives the illusion of an entry into the text that has, in fact, been written after the act of translation itself, in hindsight? Such questions will be addressed in Chapter 2 in an attempt to relocate (and dislocate) the paratextual

[7] 'Mais ce texte se présente rarement à l'état nu, sans le renfort et l'accompagnement d'un certain nombre de productions, elles-mêmes verbales ou non, comme un nom d'auteur, un titre, une préface, des illustrations, dont on ne sait pas toujours si l'on doit ou non considérer qu'elles lui appartiennent, mais qui en tout cas l'entourent et le prolongent, précisément pour le *présenter*, au sens habituel de ce verbe, mais aussi en son sens le plus fort : pour le rendre présent, pour assurer sa présence au monde, sa « réception » et sa consommation, sous la forme, aujourd'hui du moins, d'un livre.' Genette, *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[8] 'La préface auctoriale assomptive originale, que nous abrégerons donc en *préface originale*, a pour fonction cardinale d'*assurer au texte une bonne lecture*. […] [La préface permet] de *valoriser le texte* sans indisposer le lecteur par une valorisation trop immodeste, ou simplement trop visible, de son auteur.' *Ibid*., pp. 183–184.

[9] Hilla Karas explores Cees Koster's notion of a 'duplication of communicative roles in translation' ('The translator in between texts: on the textual presence of the translator as an issue in the methodology of comparative translation description', *Translation Studies: Perspectives on an Emerging Discipline*, ed. A. Riccardi, 2002, p. 29), in which he studies the position of the translator in communication schemes and revisits the traditional sender-addressee exchanges. See Hilla Karas, 'Le statut de la traduction dans les éditions bilingues: de l'interprétation au commentaire', *Palimpsestes*, 20 (2007), 137–160.

thresholds encountered in the translation of Caribbean literature to try and argue for a remapping of liminal spaces that advocate renewed (af)filiations for the region.

As a physical reality, the threshold may take diverse forms, often suggesting the presence of a framework – such as doorways, windowsills, or mirrors, to name but a few – or may represent lines of demarcation as manifested, for example, in physiological boundaries separating bodies of water and land-masses.[10]As a narratological tool, the threshold may appear as a footnote, an apposition, a dash or a parenthetical comment, suggesting the porosity of the text, as well as its intricate architecture. Whatever its shape, the threshold generally manifests itself as an entrance and a transitory space, thereby implying both movement and contact. It is defined not only in relation to two distinct zones, but also as the margin or the line itself, in tune with Genette's presentation of paratext:

> *Para* est un préfixe antithétique qui désigne à la fois la proximité et la distance, la similarité et la différence, l'intériorité et l'extériorité […] une chose qui se situe à la fois en deçà et au-delà d'une frontière, d'un seuil ou d'une marge, de statut égal et pourtant secondaire, subsidiaire, subordonné, comme un invité à son hôte, un esclave à son maître. Une chose en *para* n'est pas seulement à la fois des deux côtés de la frontière qui sépare l'intérieur et l'extérieur : elle est aussi la frontière elle-même, l'écran qui fait membrane perméable entre le dedans et le dehors. Elle opère leur confusion, laissant entrer l'extérieur et sortir l'intérieur, elle les divise et les unit.[11]

The threshold is therefore a dual space that allows impermeability and contingency at one and the same time, a manifestation of liminality understood in its most literal sense, based on the *limen*, the limit. As such, it is an intervening site that both separates the text and the off-text whilst operating as a transitional zone and as a site of

[10] In *Thinking on Thresholds: The Poetics of Transitive Spaces*, Subha Mukherji articulates the concept of liminality around four main categories, which will be summed up as follows: physical and architectural thresholds; territorial thresholds, called 'thresholds of selves and worlds'; sensory or cognitive thresholds, corresponding to different bodily states, ranging from sleep to consciousness; and finally 'narratological thresholds', that is sites of tensions and porosity that she associates with the processes of reading and creating. Subha Mukherji, *Thinking on Thresholds: The Poetics of Transitive Spaces* (London: Anthem Press, 2011), pp. 3–4.

[11] Genette, *Seuils*, p. 7.

transaction, as shall be further developed when paratext is studied within an array of translational strategies. Maite Alvarado also notes the porous boundaries separating text and paratext and posits the text not only as an end result, but also as a work in progress or a process as it were, thereby blurring the differences between a finite given text and its surrounding elements.[12]

In his general presentation of thresholds, Genette furthermore reminds his reader of certain specificities of paratext, which he classifies as follows:

- according to its spatial situation, which he divides in relation to the paratext's proximity to the actual text in two categories, namely 'péritexte', that is what immediately surrounds the text, and 'épitexte', which corresponds to external elements that can be found outside the object book proper and take the form of interviews, letters, debates, etc. In Lewin's translation, epitext corresponds to 'a fringe of the fringe', thereby establishing a difference with the less clear-cut, more ambiguous status of the footnote.[13]

- according to the temporal nature of paratext in relation to the text, itself considered perennial and untouchable, sacred as it were, raising questions on the status of paratext and the relevance of the elements added and amended over time, for example in re-editions (retranslations come to mind as well);

- according to the status of thresholds as in-between spaces, which are not quite part of the text per se but still remain literary elements, representing an in-between

[12] 'Etimológicamente, "paratexto" sería lo que rodea o acompaña al texto (*para* = junto a, al lado de), aunque no sea evidente cuál es la frontera que separa texto de entorno. El texto puede ser pensado como objeto de la lectura, a la que preexiste, o como producto de ella: se lee un texto ya escrito o se construye el texto al leer. Pero ya se considere que el texto existe *para* ser leído o *porque* es leído, la lectura es su razón de ser, y el paratexto contribuye a concretarla.' Maite Alvarado, *Paratexto* (Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires, 1994), p. 20.

[13] In the original text, Genette explains that there are different degrees of paratext, examining the porous nature of the footnote, as part of the text, while positing a similar, albeit different characteristic regarding the epitext: 'Si l'étude de la note nous fait sentir l'absence de frontières internes du paratexte, celle de l'épitexte nous confronte à son absence de limites externes: frange de la frange, l'épitexte se perd progressivement, entre autres, dans la totalité du discours auctorial.' Genette, *Seuils*, p. 318.

category that includes, interestingly enough, authorial notes but not necessarily allographic ones;[14]

- finally, according to the potentially 'illocutionary force' ascribed to paratext ('for saying it is doing it'), which at times becomes actual performance – Genette mentions 'dedications' ('dédicaces') in that regard.[15]

Whilst this study does not wish to adopt a semiotic approach, let alone investigate Genette's terminology in its minutest details, it will attempt to redefine the notion of thresholds within a larger framework that not only encompasses the realm of Caribbean literary texts, but also expands to reflect on translation as movement, an exchange not limited to the transfer of linguistic signs. The need to relocate thresholds beyond the Genettian model when investigating Caribbean literature 'in translation', as opposed to 'translated', finds its justification in the analysis, precisely, of the complex ebb and flow of international literary circulation, whereby dominant trends or modes of publication and reception may run counter to local forms of representation initially encountered in Caribbean texts.[16] In order to do so, however, the potential of thresholds to act as a 'discourse' within the text calls for specific and immediate attention.[17]

The discursive nature of paratextual elements, notably in liminal instances such as prefaces, has been posited in several studies.[18] The insertion of footnotes in any given

[14] 'La note originale est un détour local ou une bifurcation momentanée du texte, et à ce titre elle lui appartient presque autant qu'une simple parenthèse. Nous sommes ici dans une frange très indécise entre texte et paratexte.' *Ibid*., p. 301.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[16] The last chapters of the thesis will be devoted to those questions.

[17] 'Quelque investissement esthétique ou idéologique (« beau titre », préface-manifeste), quelque coquetterie, quelque inversion paradoxale qui mette l'auteur, un élément de paratexte est toujours subordonné à « son » texte, et cette fonctionnalité détermine l'essentiel de son allure et de son existence.' Genette, *Seuils*, p. 16.

[18] In her article 'La préface comme genre discursif: Dire et Avant-Dire dans *Nadja* de Breton', Licia Taverna argues that André Breton's choice to add a preface to his second edition of *Nadja* allows not only a reflection on paratext itself, but also on thresholds in relation to the text they refer to (p. 177), while strategically placing the implied author (Breton's persona) in a fictitious dialogue with the reader. Taverna unveils this illusion, viewing instead the preface as an act of 'manipulation' (pp. 186–187), in which the discourse is highly rhetorical and subjective underneath its veneer of objectivity (p. 190). Licia Taverna, 'La préface comme genre discursif: Dire et Avant-Dire dans *Nadja* de Breton', *Synergies. Pays Riverains de la Baltique*, 3 (2006), 175–189.

text, whether in translation or not, creates the impression of a counterpoint, in which a second – or several additional – voices are superimposed on the initial one, creating a jarring effect that can initiate an exchange in the form of nuanced echoes: 'Le principal avantage de la note est en effet de ménager dans le discours des effets locaux de nuance, de sourdine, ou, comme on dit encore en musique, de *registre*, qui contribuent à réduire sa fameuse, et parfois fâcheuse linéarité.'[19] Conceived in the light of Caribbean literature and translation, such forms of counter-discourse represent powerful, even if somewhat muted expressions of resistance and creativity, as writers such as Junot Díaz or Patrick Chamoiseau suggest in their respectively subversive use of the footnote and margins of the text.[20]As has been previously noted, Genette does not focus on thresholds encountered in translation; nonetheless, his chapter devoted to notes reveals features that can be, or have been ascribed to footnotes or endnotes found in works of translation as well. He claims that a note is subservient, by definition, to the text that it refers to and has an ancillary status, forever condemned to be meaningful only when read in relation to a segment of the text and yet is not quite a part of it.[21] Yet, in the context of Caribbean literature, paratextual material has also served as an instrument of assimilation and cultural appropriation, if not repression, the history of which seems to demand a more qualified position on the seemingly 'accommodating' nature of thresholds.

In fact, Genette also suggests that some notes belong to a blurry zone that situates itself in-between the margins of a text and within its actual limits, underlining nomenclatural shortcomings that he acknowledges: 'Comme on le voit, donc, la note est, du paratexte, un élément passablement élusif et fuyant. Certains types de notes, comme l'auctoriale ultérieure ou tardive, remplissent bien une fonction paratextuelle, de commentaire défensif ou autocritique. D'autres, comme les notes originales à textes discursifs, constituent plutôt des modulations du texte, guère plus distinctes que ne serait une phrase entre parenthèses ou entre tirets'.[22] As such, Genette's attention to the text's

[19] Genette, *Seuils*, p. 301.

[20] For further discussion of this point, notably on the role of the margins of the text as counterpoints and destabilizing counter narratives, see chapter 3.

[21] 'Le paratexte n'est qu'un auxiliaire, qu'un accessoire du texte.' Genette, *Ibid.*, p. 376.

[22] Genette adds: 'La question n'est donc pas de savoir si la note « appartient » ou non au paratexte, mais bien s'il y a ou non avantage et pertinence à l'envisager ainsi.' *Ibid*., p. 315.

varying degrees of discursive potential suggests that some notes belong to paratext in the sense that they remain on a lesser level, a subtext of sorts, when they are demoted to mere comments, while others are granted higher literary value, when they are promoted to extensions or ramifications of the text.[23] Thus, not only should the source of the note be taken into consideration (is it authorial? allographic?), the very nature of the addendum itself and the effect it creates on its addressee, whose identity will have to be disclosed, should be taken into account as well.[24] The caution with which notes should be approached thus invites further reflection on the metaphor of disease and defectiveness that Genette develops in his work, particularly in the context of translation, at times judged as a flawed copy of the original, where the authenticity of the text is called into question.[25] Those metaphors also find numerous echoes in Caribbean literature, in which propriety of expression and the use of a supposed 'standard' are often pitted against creolized forms that give rise to new poetics of hybridity. Interestingly then, Genette's work invites us to rethink thresholds as an ambivalent *pharmakon*, a site of potential dangers and pitfalls but also of possible recovery (of hidden meanings latent in the original), if not potential redress (in the case of retranslations, for instance), while leading to a new aesthetics of the threshold. After all, Genette's mention of Alain's statement on the note – 'c'est le médiocre qui s'attache au beau' – calls for a reappraisal of literary norms and expectations.[26] What if liminality were to be addressed beyond the scope of paratext understood as extratextual strategies, and rethought in the light of textual, *as well as* peripheral, interferences? And what if thresholds were no longer solely meant to be crossed, but on the contrary pondered upon and investigated as powerful, intervening sites of resistance?

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[23] Jorge Luis Borges's own use of footnotes as intrinsic elements of the text comes to mind here. See in particular 'Pierre Ménard, autor del Quijote' in *Ficciones* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1956).

[24] For instance, in *Un dimanche au cachot*, Chamoiseau's digressions function as interferences that help voice the unutterable past of slavery into the present, while the implied author refuses to describe the horrors of slavery in the main text: 'Je refuse de décrire ces cachots que les esclavagistes appelaient « effrayants ». Ils balisent une ténébreuse mémoire. Ils emergent dans mes libres, juste nommés : ceux qui les ont cronstruits doivent en assumer seuls la damnation.' Patrick Chamoiseau, *Un dimanche au cachot* (Paris: Gallimard, 2007), p. 41.

[25] 'Si la note est une maladie du texte, c'est une maladie qui, comme quelques autres, peut avoir son « bon usage ».' Genette, *Seuils*, p. 301.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 293.

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The opening chapter of the thesis will present possible venues of thought aiming at the redefinition of thresholds, firstly in the context of translation, where higher visibility of the translator will be advocated, particularly in the margins of the text. Aware of the ethical concerns that such an overt presence may cause, the first section of the chapter will articulate the notion of liminality around the act of trespassing, interrogating concepts of authority, ownership as well as authorship. Then, when considered in relation to Caribbean literature, thresholds will be presented as enclaves of cultural resistance that are reminiscent of (past) colonial legacies on the one hand, and that invite, on the other, to perform acts of (underground) subversion, if not overt breaking-and-entering, in an attempt to relocate Caribbean specificities away from ethnocentric forms of representation.

Chapter 2 will focus more closely on liminal material located either before the text itself or right after it, mostly taking the form of prefaces, introductions, (end)notes, glossaries or afterwords, and will explore those sites in conformity and nonconformity with traditional rites of passage from which Caribbean literature emerges as 'authentic'. Bringing together the fields of anthropology and translation in their shared concern of overcoming the possible shortcomings of representation, this section will focus on thresholds as highly ritualized spaces where recognized specialists of the Caribbean present new filiations for the region and its literary production. Feminist translation strategies of 'transformance' will be studied alongside authorial subversive practices to suggest that thresholds should aim at staging Caribbean un-translatabilities, so that paratext becomes a site of 'opaque revelations' rather than a source of absolute clarification.

Problematic crossings will, in turn, be the main source of focus in chapter 3, which will take the 1937 Parsley Massacre as its primary case study, whereby the act of (a usually forced) translation served as an instrument of death and a re-enactment of the Shibboleth. Yet, when undertaken as a voluntary manifestation of cultural resistance, translation, and its counterpart untranslatability, will be explored as potential redemptive sites aiming at the re-covery and survival of a pan-Caribbean, intergenerational cultural

memory. Thresholds will therefore move from highly hostile spaces of repression and annihilation to potential *loci* of hospitality and communality.

Bearing in mind the building of a pan-Caribbean cultural memory emerging through the very act of translation, the following chapter will challenge even further traditionally held views on paratext, arguing that translational thresholds can paradoxically help decolonize and further re/dislocate the region's literary production to eventually partake in acts of reparation for the Caribbean. Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* and several of its translations, including some that were clearly aimed at regional (mostly Cuban) audiences, will serve as the main case study of this section to interrogate intra-and interlinguistic transfers as corrective manipulations of the text. The chapter will also lead to a reflection on the historicity of both original(s) and derivatives in the context of the *Cahier*, a palimpsestic condition that invites constant retranslations, if not a necessary (re)acknowledgment of prior, existing versions to generate an endless dialogue between text, subtext and paratext.

In similar fashion, the notions of source and translated text will be blurred in chapter 5, as the Caribbean author will be presented as a liminal figure, a (self-) translator who probes the waters of transculturation and (self)legitimation. A particular emphasis will be laid on two Puerto Rican women writers, Rosario Ferré and Esmeralda Santiago, as their works present rich and varied examples of translation as 'trans-fusion' and bifocality.[27] Self-translation will also be extended to those Caribbean writers, diasporic or not, who choose to primarily address global audiences in their work, and thereby may face the risk of auto-exoticism when transplanting themselves.

The last two chapters will be devoted to alternative modes of literary circulation for Caribbean literature in translation. In chapter 6, thresholds will emerge as porous sites of creolization that ultimately help (re)create archipelagic models of literary intertextualities and participate in establishing transoceanic cultural correspondences,

[27] The two notions have first been defined in Laëtitia Saint-Loubert, '(Ré)écritures bifocales: trans-lations et trans-fusions portoricaines dans les autotraductions de Rosario Ferré et Esmeralda Santiago', *Auteurs-Traducteurs: l'entre-deux de l'écriture* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de Paris Ouest, forthcoming) and will be further explained in chapter 5.

whereby Caribbean literature intersects with other hybrid, polyphonic spaces. The final chapter will focus on the Puerto Rican publisher *Isla Negra Editores* to interrogate the validity of a transversal, transregional mode of literary circulation for Caribbean literature. The aim here will be to observe, from this particular publisher addressing mostly Hispanophone readers, how new coordinates of archipelagic modes of literary circulation (and, to a certain extent, diffusion) can be generated from the landscape of minor, transnational solidarities to secure the future of Caribbean literature in translation.

1. Relocating Caribbean thresholds in translation.

1.1. Liminality in translation: bordering on criminality?

Je me lève pour aller lui ouvrir. Je crains le pire.[28]

In his novel *Vengeance du traducteur*, French translator Brice Matthieussent fictionalizes the power struggle between a writer and his translator in a postmodern tale that deconstructs the linearity of the narrative by integrating footnotes which gradually come to replace the text itself and symbolize the translator's act of revenge over the author, whose prose is repeatedly indented and eventually laid bare. The novel ends with the translator, who has now become an author, and whose own book is about to be translated. The epigraph opening this section corresponds to the closing sentences of the novel and reveals that the former translator turned author is about to let in his own translator, but hesitates to let him cross the threshold into his apartment for fear of being ousted out of his own world in turn. In spite of its fictitiousness, Matthieussent's story offers a reflection on the position of the translator when his presence is felt to be overbearing, that is, when he amends the text to such an extent that his marginal presence, expressed in the form of footnotes, interrupts the flow of the narrative and becomes a hindrance to the reader (and the author himself). The act of translation is then associated with a form of trespassing, a transgression that not only makes the translator more visible than he is supposed to be, but also breaches the pact tacitly established between author and reader, and allegedly there to ensure the latter's suspension of disbelief.[29] Ananda Devi has thus expressed her reluctance to use footnotes in the translation of David Dabydeen's novel *The Counting House*, as to her, such a strategy was in total disagreement with the bond an author and a reader share: 'Je trouve peu utile les notes, qui à mon sens rompent le fil de la lecture et, pire, rompent le pacte avec le lecteur, qui doit se situer dans la réalité du roman et ne doit pas se voir rappeler à chaque page qu'il

[28] Brice Matthieussent, *Vengeance du traducteur* (Paris: P.O.L., 2009), p. 309.

[29] Genette for example asserts that such intrusions operate a break, 'une rupture de régime énonciatif' (*Seuils*, p. 305), while countless authors wish to maintain the illusion of a transparent, uninterrupted narrative, so that they feel their reader will remain in the world they have created for them.

s'agit d'un livre et rien de plus.'[30] If paratextual elements are then deemed a hurdle to the reading experience, are they to be ultimately cast aside for the sake of transparency and better legibility? In short, is having recourse to liminality in translation tantamount to committing a crime?[31]

Such issues have to be addressed in a close reading and meticulous analysis of the texts chosen, as it seems that no general method should be ascribed to so complex an act as translation, since it requires taking into consideration the uniqueness of a given text but also the specificities attached to the receptor culture, the so-called expectations of the reader, the norms and taboos associated with a certain genre[32] and, last but not least, the publisher's requirements. However, the use of thresholds in translation, whether they take the form of paratext as defined by Genette or a more subtle, interlinear shape, such as in-glosses or 'covert cushioning'[33] (elements found in the text itself or its interstices rather than outside) inevitably brings about the code of conduct that the translator should abide by and to a larger extent, the question of the ethics of translation, which by and large has remained unaccounted for in seminal works on paratext such as Genette's.[34] Looking at translation through the prism of liminality thus helps highlight the translator's

[30] Personal exchange with Ananda Devi in an email received 10 May 2015.

[31] Appiah, on the contrary, recommends opting for a 'thick translation', one that 'seeks with its annotations and its accompanying glosses to locate the text in a rich cultural and linguistic context', underpinning the full potential and legitimacy of a translation precisely in its use of paratext. Kwame Anthony Appiah, 'Thick Translation', *Callaloo,* 16, 4 (1993), 808–19 (p. 817).

[32] Ellen McRae, in an article on prefaces written by translators shows how those liminal spaces can become sites of intercultural understanding as well as of negotiations and transactions. She mentions several prominent translators and their stance regarding their own visibility in the thresholds of the text as well as the reactions that such presence sparks among critics and publishers alike, depending on the type of books translated: 'Chakravorty Spivak recalls receiving a contemptuous notice from *Kirkus Review* for including a preface and an afterword in a work of fiction that she translated. She contrasts this with the abundant praise that she has received for providing the same for a volume of philosophical criticism.' Ellen McRae, 'The Role of Translators' Prefaces to Contemporary Literary Translations into English: An Empirical Study', *Translation Peripheries: Paratextual Elements in Translation*, ed. by Anna Gil-Bardají, Pilar Orero and Sara Roviea-Esteva (Bern; New York: Peter Lang, 2012), pp. 63-82 (p. 69).

[33] Term coined by Peter Young, in opposition to 'overt cushioning' which corresponds to the use of footnotes, endnotes, glossaries and such elements found outside the text itself (quoted in Bandia's *Translation as Reparation*, p. 46). Other scholars, such as Chantal Zabus, have referred to such strategies of in-text alterations as 'interlinear translation'. See Chantal Zabus, *The African Palimpsest: Indigenization of Language in the West African Europhone Novel* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1991), p. 171.

[34] One notable exception is Pascale Sardin's article 'De la note du traducteur comme commentaire: entre texte, paratexte et prétexte', *Palimpsestes*, 20 (2007) [accessed 16 July 2015], <http://palimpsestes.revues.org/99>

positionality, particularly in the role (s)he performs in prefaces or afterwords, whereby (s)he may instrumentalize the threshold in a somewhat didactic, if not political or ideological gesture.[35] Maite Alvarado underlines the pragmatic aspect of paratextual material, there in the book to guide the reader's understanding of the text and therefore facilitate its reception: '[El paratexto es un] [d]ispositivo pragmático, que, por una parte, predispone – o condiciona – para la lectura, por otra, acompaña en el trayecto, cooperando con el lector en su trabajo de construcción – o reconstrucción – del sentido.'[36]

Border thinking has also served as a useful concept to study translation phenomena and strategies, particularly when it comes to studying translation within the framework of world literature.[37] Border theory appears indeed relevant when considering the Caribbean in translation, as the region and its cultural productions, taking the form of visual arts, literature, or social incentives, are usually grouped and/or divided along linguistic and geographical lines, suffering thereby from a blatant lack of interregional translations.[38] This contribution proposes to explore instead how a shift from borders to

[35] See chapter 4 on Césaire's *Cahier* for further analysis.

[36] Alvarado, *Paratexto*, p. 20.

[37] Emily Apter's *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (London: Verso, 2013) testifies to that point, all the more so as one of her chapters focuses on 'Checkpoints and Sovereign Borders', pp. 99–114. In her monograph, Mary Louise Pratt speaks in turn of the 'contact zone', a term arguably less evocative of territorial or military politics than 'checkpoints'; yet, she highlights the presence of a 'mystique of reciprocity' in the travel writing of Europeans when depicting their arrival scene in the Americas. Pratt describes those encounters as 'potent sites for framing relations of contact and setting the terms of its representations', thereby stressing the asymmetrical relations of power at stake in those first exchanges. See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2dn edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 77. Mexican artist and author Gloria Anzaldúa living in the United States has also worked on border theory, using the concept of *La Frontera* as 'a metaphor for all types of crossings – between geopolitical boundaries, sexual transgressions, social dislocations, and the crossings necessary to exist in multiple linguistic and cultural contexts.' Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: La Frontera, The New Mestiza*, 4th edn (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012), p. 6.

[38] French Caribbean authors tend for example to be published in Paris or Montreal and very few publishing houses exist in the context of Martinique, Guadeloupe, or French Guyana – *Ibis Rouge Éditions* being a notable exception. Other interregional publishers, such as *Isla Negra Editores*, based in Puerto Rico but working closely with Cuba and the Dominican Republic, target readers who share one primary linguistic feature – in that case Spanish –, and the majority of the work they publish is meant, mostly, but not solely, for a specific portion of the Caribbean (for a complete analysis, see Chapter 7). *House of Nehesi Publishers* is another established publishing house from Saint Martin that features multilingual editions of works written by prominent Caribbean authors in its catalogue. Such works include Lasana M. Sekou's collection of poems *Nativity/Nativité/Natividad* and his anthology of poems *Pelican Heart/Corazón de pelicano* (both published in 2010).

thresholds as *loci* of cultural resistance in translation helps redefine contact zones as possible, even if at times problematic, entrances rather than as checkpoints.[39] Unlike territorial borders, a poetics articulated around the threshold entails the potential of a transcultural perspective, based on cultural familiarity and/or distance or even alienation, and helps focus on the individual – and communal – experiences, rather than on national forms of discourse. The threshold then manifests the migrancy of a community that is constantly in movement, both at home and away, that lives separated from and yet is incorporated within a larger regional or global framework, a community that lives in transition, or in translation, and invites a reflection on contact zones as transcultural and transnational spaces. When applied to the Caribbean this approach allows us to resituate physical, national, linguistic, cultural and even psychological boundaries in an archipelagic context. Taking as its point of departure the porous nature of the threshold, such a stance can help re-establish transoceanic correspondences based on cultural encounters rather than relocate Caribbean locales within the core-periphery paradigm.[40] Yet, when a translation is aimed for a metropolitan readership, the translator may be tempted to offer a transparent, smooth transposition in which paratext is rejected to facilitate the text's entry into the receptor culture, a choice which might be preferred over attempts at favoring a certain opacity. On the other hand, paratext can be associated with ethnographic practices, and as such seems caught in a double-bind, a situation that liminality underscores and enacts, as the threshold is both a transitional space that opens into another one and the zone forever remaining out of bounds and in-between two sites. In bringing to the fore the translator's intervention, thresholds also question the two opposite ends of the same spectrum relative to the degree of appropriation of a text in translation and its conformity to the receptor culture, tendencies that Venuti has called

[39] While Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2008) and Emily Apter's *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*, (London: Verso, 2013) emphasize the border or 'contact zone' (Pratt) rather than the threshold. The relationship between author and translator has also been studied in terms of opposition involving proximity and affect, as the telling title *Intimate Enemies: Translation in Francophone Contexts*, ed. by Kathryn Batchelor and Claire Bisdorff (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013) suggests.

[40] See Chapter 6.

'domestication' and 'foreignization'.[41] Interestingly enough, the degree of plausibility of a text seems to reach higher expectations where it applies to a translation, as Ian Craig has noted in the context of Caribbean literature: 'Nonetheless, the apparently automatic tendency to attribute an inconsistency to inadequacy in the translation, even amongst readers accustomed to reading inconsistently represented Creole, is perhaps revealing of the entrenchment of the above-mentioned assumptions that prioritize readability above all other characteristics of a translation.'[42] In fact, the threshold becomes a site of difference where 'the remainder', to cite Venuti, is enacted. Unlike the border which focuses on national, geographical and at times natural demarcations, the threshold emphasizes the notion of domesticity and thereby the unique, intimate relationship the reader has with the text. Liminality invites a movement and entry into; yet, it posits the problematic transfers involved in the act of crossing and, to a certain extent, highlights the values of remaining slightly in between two locales or two cultures to better assess the interconnections but also the gaps between them. Thus, when a translator decides to resort to a preface or an afterword to address his/her work, the extent to which paratext becomes a new codified genre in which the voice is no longer that of the author, but that of someone supposed to remain in their shadow becomes a site of interrogation. Similarly, when the translator decides to opt for explanatory references, (s)he also poses the threshold as a site of untranslatability, by exposing the cultural gaps and inadequacies (s)he faces when carrying across Caribbean literature. Arguably then, focusing on thresholds runs counter to the task at hand for a translator, unless 'untranslatability' is

[41] In the liminal chapter to *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*, 'Heterogeneity', Venuti argues that '[t]ranslating can never simply be communication between equals because it is fundamentally ethnocentric. Most literary projects are initiated in the domestic culture, where a foreign text is selected to satisfy different tastes from those that motivated its composition and reception in its native culture. And the very function of translating is assimilation, the inscription of a foreign text with domestic intelligibilities and interests. I follow Berman (1992: 4–5; cf. his revision in 1995: 93–94) in suspecting any literary translation that mystifies this inevitable domestication as an untroubled communicative act. Good translation is demystifying: it manifests in its own language the foreignness of the foreign text (Berman 1985: 89). […] Good translation is minoritizing: it releases the remainder by cultivating a heterogeneous discourse, opening up the standard dialect and literary canons to what is foreign to themselves, to the substandard and the marginal.' Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 11.

[42] Ian Craig, 'Translation in the Shadow of the Giants, Anglophone Caribbean Vernacular in a Translated Literary Text', *The Translator*, 12, 1 (2006), 65–84 (p. 75).

understood as a strategy of cultural difference.[43] The title of this section therefore calls attention not only to the integration of liminality within the realm of translation, but also, through the choice of the preposition 'in' rather than the conjunction 'and', invites a reflection on transition and movement as well as on a transdisciplinary approach to thresholds. Translation is thus more than a linguistic transfer in which the translator carries across a language and its cultural references: the translator actually comes to embody, while situating himself in the recesses of the text, the ideal position of a *passeur* – or a smuggler, some may say – able to straddle two (or more) worlds. By highlighting the porosity of the contact zone that the translator inhabits, not only does his task take on a broader meaning, possibly calling for a reflection on meta-translation, it also revisits the position of the translator as a liminal figure who can situate himself no longer as subservient, whether to the author, the reader or potentially the publisher, but instead as a figure of agency.[44] Canadian women critics and scholars have paid close attention to the notion of loyalty to an original text and its author, trying to undermine such notions by re-appropriating themselves liminal spaces in translation, thereby reforming the traditional, patriarchal concept of unfaithfulness generally associated with femininity. Lori Chamberlain, for example, has argued the following:

> For les *belles infidèles*, fidelity is defined by an implicit contract between translation (as woman) and original (as husband, father, or author). However, the infamous "double standard" operates here as it might have in traditional marriages: the "unfaithful" wife/translation is publicly tried

[43] Paola Zaccaria has wondered 'whether a translation without assimilation, without cannibalism, is possible, a translation that receives the other as its best when it has the humility of acknowledging that not everything can be translated (i.e. when it accepts that cultural differences entail, at a linguistic level, untranslatability: when it accepts disorientation).' Paola Zaccaria,'The Art and Poetics of Translation as Hospitality', *The Conditions of Hospitality, Ethics, Politics, and Aesthetics on the Threshold of the Possible*, ed. by Thomas Claviez (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), p. 171. In *Against World Literature – On the Politics of Untranslatability,* Emily Apter has likewise tested the hypothesis that untranslatability could manifest resistance in the face of globalization, and nuances her concept of the 'translation zone', defining it no longer 'as a porous boundary facilitating supranational comity and regimes of general equivalence but as a threshold of untranslatability and political blockade'. Emily Apter, *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature* (Woodstock, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 110.

[44] See Greimas's 'actantial model', for example. In relation to chapter 3 which focuses, among other texts, on Edwidge Danticat's *The Farming of Bones*, ancillary figures, among which the main protagonist, Amabelle, play decisive roles in the unfolding of events, a characteristic that will be associated with acts of translation and crossings.

> for crimes the husband/original is by law incapable of committing.[45]

In the context of Caribbean literature, acts of self-translation by women writers who belong to the diaspora or have been part of it, as is the case with Rosario Ferré and Esmeralda Santiago, both from Puerto Rico, open up yet another avenue of thought.[46] Perceived as liminal figures who inhabit cultural and linguistic contact zones and try to voice their authority both in their own native language, Spanish, and in that of their translated selves, English, those authors offer a Caribbean insight into the concept of 'womanhandling' texts in translation, hinting at liminality as a gendered space of resistance.[47]

Ultimately, an approach to translation from such an angle underscores the belief that no translation is ever transparent, let alone neutral. Centring on thresholds as a *locus* of partiality therefore helps bring to the fore the complex exchanges between author/translator and publisher, while keeping in mind that the particularising effect of the reference found in translational paratext – as well as its evocative counterpart, namely its absence – recalls the translator's own interpretation of the source text and thereby their own partisanship.[48] Rather than viewing the original as a sacred space that should not be altered at any cost – a mere u-topia, as precisely, the translated text would not be anchored in a new reality, targeting a specific audience – the threshold allows to consider translation as a site of duplicity. Not only is the threshold a transitional space, it also may lead to

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[45] Cited in Rosemary Arrojo, 'Fidelity and The Gendered Translation', *TTR: traduction, terminologie, rédaction*, 7, 2 (1994), 147–163 (p. 148).

[46] See Chapter 5 on self-translation and the case of Puerto Rico especially.

[47] Barbara Godard defines womanhandling as follows: '*Womanhandling* the text in translation means replacing the modest, self-effacing translation. The translator becomes an active participant in the creating of meaning.' Cited in R. Arrojo 'Fidelity and The Gendered Translation', p. 151.

[48] [La note souligne le caractère] 'toujours partiel du texte de référence, et par conséquent le caractère toujours local de l'énoncé porté en note' (Genette, *Seuils*, p. 293). Maria Tymoczko claims that translation is by definition 'metonymic' as 'it is a form of representation in which parts or aspects of the source text come to stand for the whole'. She also notes that 'translators select some elements, some aspects or some parts of the source text to highlight and preserve; translators prioritize and privilege some parameters and not others; and, thus, translators represent some aspects of the source text partially or fully and others not at all in a translation. In any translation process, whether the source text is canonical or not, central or marginalized, from a dominant culture or a subaltern one, a partial encoding comes to represent the source text […]'. Maria Tymoczko, *Translation in a Postcolonial Context*, *Early Irish Literature in Translation* (Manchester: St Jerome, 1999), p. 55.

dead ends – the 'false promise of leading somewhere, presenting only surfaces' – whilst, at the same time, revamping the relationships between authoritative voice and reader.[49] As a result, thresholds can become the embodied and imaginary space of the *Unheimlich*, thereby confirming that translation means both being at home, in one's comfort zone, even if that rooting is not pinpointed in a precise location on a map, while also experiencing a somewhat unsettling feeling of 'unhomeliness' when entering the Caribbean world on the part of the reader.[50] In 'Caribbean New York: Uncanny Urban Space', Erica L. Johnson brings to the fore the fragmented nature of Caribbean identity, particularly as observed in the writings of Caribbean women writers, positing the cosmopolitan urban space in the United States as a threshold, an in-between world where 'characters do not completely leave their national or regional communities behind when they move to New York but rather encounter them again in the city'.[51]

Reassessing liminality in translation appears as a necessary concern then, as it unsettles widely held assumptions according to which translation, at least as a textual transfer, should imply some degree of silencing and transparency. However, the translator does not always hold the key to unlock all the potential entries of a given reference. By highlighting as they do the ever-present untranslatability of the world, that is the impossibility of applying one system of overarching equivalency to another reality, thresholds manifest the singularity of cultures and invite dialogue and movement between two texts or two cultures that challenge existing boundaries, whether drawn or imaginary. They also question the authority of the source text, much to the dismay of the author at times, as the opening quote to this chapter illustrates. They invite further reflection on paratext or textual interferences not just as rhetorical tools, but as a discursive – as well as disruptive – practice, whereby the translator is not simply an addressee, but also a messenger whose voice is added onto that of the author and carries across a text (s)he has first experienced as a reader.

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[49] Mukherji, *Thinking on Thresholds: The Poetics of Transitive Spaces*, p. 6.

[50] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 2nd edn (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2012), p. 13.

[51] *Caribbeing: Comparing Caribbean Literatures and Cultures*, ed. by Kristian Van Haesendonck and Theo D'haen (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2014), p. 139.

1.2. Caribbean thresholds: enclaves of cultural resistance

> Having been borne across the world, we are translated men. It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained.[52]

> It is an immemorial experience. And yet, each beauty island: *isola*: so close, so small, so secret: responding, all along the chain, to that touch of sun, that same grace of wind, the same terror of earthquake or hurricane or volcano in the sky at night; the same riddims: cadence, calypso, reggae, mento, meringue; the same speech resonating out of body-language. And yet each islet feels itself locked up inside itself, with the castle of its coral skin.[53]

Caribbean men and women are beings in translation. They have, one way or another, at some point in their genealogy and personal history, experienced uprooting. But what makes the Caribbean a unique area, particularly relevant in relation to the trope of thresholds? How does the Caribbean problematize liminality in translation, and in turn, how can a reflection starting off around the notion of thresholds help resituate the Caribbean as a unique *locus* of studies – departing from analyses interested in the region as part of broader concerns such as Postcolonial Studies or Francophonie to name but a few?[54] The decision to frame the concept of thresholds in the Caribbean was prompted, in fact, by the need to rethink this complex region beyond the vertical, linear relations of core-periphery or concentric regional alliances that translations, admittedly, have been

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[52] Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London: Granta and Penguin), p. 17.

[53] Edward K. Brathwaite, 'Caribbean Culture – Two Paradigms', *Missile and Capsule*, ed. by J. Martini (Bremen, Universität Bremen, 1983), p. 22.

[54] The Caribbean is for instance mostly found in relation to other geographical areas, especially when analysed from the angle of translation or literature studies, as Paul Bandia's study *Writing and Translating Francophone Discourse: Africa, The Caribbean, Diaspora* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2014) or Françoise Lionnet's *Postcolonial Representations: Women, Literature, Identity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), among others, attest to. Attempts have been made to find new venues of study for the Caribbean, as *Caribbeing: Comparing Caribbean Literatures and Cultures*, ed. by Kristian Van Haesendonck and Theo D'haen (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2014), suggests. In the introduction, K. Van Haesendonck thus notes that due to 'continued diasporization and balkanization, important parts of Caribbean literature and art still remain largely unknown to scholars' and tackles the issue of 'this critical insularism, which we find also entrenched in academic departments' (p. 1).

contributing to, to focus instead on the entangled, oblique ramifications that the Caribbean shows in its own intraregional and interregional exchanges, but also outside them. Yet the Caribbean shall remain at the heart of this thesis which was born out of a desire to revisit the region and its intricate dynamics to, in turn, stress its ability to renegotiate its own position in world literature but also to rethink translational thresholds in the light of the Caribbean's own specific, intricate limens.

In the introduction to his seminal work on the 'modern/colonial world', Walter D. Mignolo claims the following:

> Border thinking can only be such from a subaltern perspective, never from a territorial (e.g. from inside modernity) one. Border thinking from a territorial perspective becomes a machine of appropriation of the colonial differe/a/nces; the colonial difference as an object of study rather than as an epistemic potential. Border thinking from the perspective of subalternity is a machine for intellectual decolonization.[55]

This statement calls for further discussion in relation to the area of study under consideration and more precisely in relation to Caribbean literature. While it seems essential to consider Caribbean thought, theory and culture to approach the translation of literature produced in the region, an analysis that situates the Caribbean within the larger frame of subaltern studies seems at once of interest and in conflict with the wish to singularize the Caribbean as a unique site of study. Therefore, Caribbean thresholds need to be defined both along the grain of broader concepts that have emerged from subaltern and postcolonial studies, but also, and perhaps more importantly against their grain to bring to the fore Caribbean specificities. Earlier on in his introduction, Mignolo argues that 'translation was the special tool to absorb the colonial difference previously established' and opposes 'border thinking' to the unifying effects of translation as an instrument of assimilation that smoothes out all irregularities.[56] Taking an opposite stance on translation, this thesis wishes to position thresholds in the transfer of Caribbean

[55] Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*, re-edn (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 45.
[56] *Ibid*., p. 3.

literature as sites where difference can be underscored and valorized to reappraise translation as a decolonizing tool. However, this entails a re-mapping of thresholds away from ethnocentric and exoticising practices. In his *Discours sur le colonialisme*, Aimé Césaire categorically rejects the idea that colonisation ever put cultures in contact: 'Mais alors, je pose la question suivante: la colonisation a-t-elle vraiment *mis en contact*? Ou, si l'on préfère, de toutes les manières *d'établir contact*, était-elle la meilleure ? Je réponds *non*.'[57] It is interesting to note, moreover, that throughout his *Discours*, Césaire uses footnotes in an attempt to denounce, then resituate, and, by the same token, rehabilitate formerly colonised and to a certain extent 'annexed' territories as well as histories. Not only does he assert the need to relocate those histories within the main components of his text, he also uses the footnotes he peppers his text with as a means to circumvent ethnocentric readings of ethnography. Thus, whilst citing the works of Roger Caillois, Claude Lévi-Strauss or again Michel Leiris, Césaire nonetheless mentions, in the margins of the text, criticism of those ethnographers:

> Il est significatif qu'au moment même où M. Caillois entreprenait sa croisade, une revue colonialiste belge, d'inspiration gouvernementale (*Europe-Afrique*, n°6, janvier 1955), se livrait à une agression absolument identique contre l'ethnographie : « Auparavant, le colonisateur concevait fondamentalement son rapport avec le colonisé comme celui d'un homme civilisé avec un homme sauvage. La colonisation reposait ainsi sur une hiérarchie, grossière assurément, mais vigoureuse et nette. »
>
> C'est ce rapport hiérarchique que l'auteur de l'article, un certain M. Piron, reproche à l'ethnographie de détruire. Comme M. Caillois, il s'en prend à Michel Leiris et Lévi-Strauss. […]
> Enfin, pour une fois, c'est un excès d'égalitarisme qui est reproché à la pensée américaine – Otto Klineberg, professeur de psychologie à l'Université de Columbia, ayant affirmé : « C'est une erreur capitale de considérer les autres cultures comme inférieures à la nôtre, simplement parce qu'elles sont différentes. »
> Décidément, M. Caillois est en bonne compagnie.[58]

[57] Aimé Césaire, *Discours sur le colonialisme*, suivi du *Discours sur la Négritude* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 2004), p. 10.
[58] *Ibid*., pp. 60–61.

The paratext therefore manages to both criticize and destabilize any disparaging comments aimed at non-European cultures or populations, hence acting as a counterweight to centuries of ethnographic practices consisting in framing the Other in such a way that they would be pitted against Western norms and would very often be relegated to a footnote in the history of mankind.[59] Paratextual elements have therefore inherited centuries of ethnographic practices that demand a dislocation of commodifying strategies to offer, instead, a relocation of Caribbean specificities within their region and the world at large, but no longer as entities (or oddities) put on display.[60]

As sites inviting repeated forms of crossings, thresholds are also key to the Caribbean as a region whose geography is composed of mainland territories, but also of islands and islets that form archipelagoes. Insularity thus brings about such phenomena as discontinuity, mobility as well as displacement in everyday life. It also entails, when movement is impossible or hindered, isolation and possible fragmentation, as Kamau Brathwaite reminds us in the epigraph opening this section. Thus, the ocean functions as a threshold shared by all Caribbean islands; it is a space which at one and the same time binds the Caribbean people together and separates them. Yet, in Caribbean literature, the sea has been endowed with much more symbolic importance, particularly as it draws commonalities between Caribbean individuals and their sense of a shared history, as encapsulated by Derek Walcott in his famous poem 'The Sea is History'.[61] Similarly, writers from the Pacific have noted the dual nature of the ocean, as a space where islands are at once scattered, remote and isolated from one another in the immensity of the ocean ('islands in a far sea'), and a space organized around those same islands ('a sea of

[59] Later on, Césaire adds: 'Gobineau disait: « Il n'est d'histoire que blanche. » M. Caillois, à son tour, constate : « Il n'est d'ethnographie que blanche. » C'est l'Occident qui fait l'ethnographie des autres, non les autres qui font l'ethnographie de l'Occident.' (*Ibid*., p. 65)

[60] Césaire's *Discours* has been chosen as an example of this necessity to relocate thresholds as sites of differenciation as a prelude to Chapter 4, which will focus on the (re)translations and re-editions of Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* both within the Caribbean (mostly in Cuba) and without its confines.

[61] The opening lines of his poem read as follows: 'Where are your monuments, your battles, martyrs?/ Where is your tribal memory? Sirs,/ in that grey vault. The sea. The sea/ has locked them up. The sea is History.' Derek Walcott, *Selected Poems*, ed. by Edward Baugh (London: Faber, 2007), p. 123.

islands').[62] Thresholds recall, moreover, the Caribbean's fragile ecosystem, especially in the context of the coral, also evoked in the second epigraph to this section, a reality of particular concern to writers such as Khal Torabully, whose collection of poems, *Chair corail, fragments coolies*, uses this trope as a constitutive part of Mauritian identity, in a similar vein to Brathwaite's 'coral skin'. [63] Liminality also manifests the symbiotic relationship that Caribbean people have with their landscape, inscribed as they are within a specific locale which they have to comply with but also frequently part from, as Caribbean diasporas attest to.[64] So much so that Caribbean individuals come to inhabit an in-between space of cultural complexity in which their identity is both singular and plural, in other words fragmented. The threshold functions as an ambiguous space of uprooting (being away from home) and belonging (to a diaspora, for example), much akin to Said's 'rift' in which the exile lives in a 'discontinuous state of being'.[65] However, contrary to a gap or a crevice, the threshold stresses the possibility of finding oneself or one's intimate self within the *locus* of domesticity, whether it actually takes an architectural form – after

[62] In 'L'Imaginaire géopolitique de la Polynésie dans la littérature française: de Bougainville à Chantal T. Spitz', Torsten König cites the Fijian poet and anthropologist Hau'ofa and opposes island poetics from mainland worldviews recalling Antonio Benítez-Rojo's *The Repeating Island* in its study of chaos theory: 'Le regard de l'Européen est formé par une tradition qui remonte jusqu'à l'Antiquité grecque. Les Grecs comprenaient la mer comme un vide, un désordre (*aperion, chaos*) tandis que seulement la terre représentait l'ordre (*cosmos*). Dans cette perspective géomythique il est difficile de concevoir un ordre formé à la fois par des îles et la mer qui les entoure, de concevoir cette structure comme des *terres continues*, signification du mot *continent* en latin.' *Worldwide. Archipels de la mondialisation. Archipiélagos de la globalización. A TransArea Symposium*, ed. by Ottmar Ette and Gesine Müller (Madrid; Frankfurt am Main: Iberoamericana – Vervuert, 2012), pp. 129–148 (p. 129).

[63] Khal Torabully's example, although not directly written from a Caribbean perspective, has been inserted both for the transoceanic roots that the author re-establishes between the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean in their shared experience of Indian indenture labor, and for its Caribbean reception, as it was published by *Ibis Rouge*, a Caribbean-based publisher, and was endorsed by Raphaël Confiant by way of a preface, 'Un chantier si pur', which invokes, in turn, family ties between Coolies of different islands: 'Il sait que le coolie de Maurice, comme son cousin de la Martinique ou de la Guadeloupe, est descendant de ces parias, de ces intouchables du sud de l'Inde, qui durent fuir misère, famine et maladies.' *Chair corail, fragments coolies* (Petit-Bourg: Ibis Rouge, 1999), p. 8. Emily Apter also notes 'the ecology of endangered languages and the statistics of language extinction' in *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (London, New York: Verso, 2013), p. 43.

[64] In her article, 'Poetics of Landscape: Édouard Glissant's Creolized Ecologies', Carine M. Mardorossian analyses Glissant's concept of creolization as a powerful transcultural force that allows to escape the confines of national or identitarian limitations. Carine M. Mardorossian, 'Poetics of Landscape: Édouard Glissant's Creolized Ecologies', *Callaloo*, 36, 4 (2013), pp. 983–994.

[65] Edward Said, 'Reflections on Exile', *Reflections on Exile: And Other Literary and Cultural Essays* (London: Granta, 2001), pp. 137–140.

all, building one's abode is a recurring leitmotif in Caribbean literature – or whether the dwelling is ethereal and arises from one's imagination. Inevitably, then, the threshold also recalls the experience of plantation life shared throughout the Caribbean and beyond, where the site of dwelling has also become a site of violence and annihilation. The etymology of 'threshold' is in that regard particularly interesting, as it suggests the inner violence found on the plantation system with its first element, 'thresh', being identified as a derivative of 'thrash', 'still frequent in the sense of beating out corn'.[66] The term is therefore evocative of the flail, and to a larger extent of the tools used to work the cane. The Spanish term 'umbral' also invokes some sort of shadow or opacity, while the French 'seuil' carries with it the semantic field of the soil, the earth and evokes man's attachment to it.[67] Taking into consideration the various etymological, hence representational roots of liminality as encountered in the languages spoken throughout the Caribbean, seems of importance for a project adopting a multilingual, multicultural approach. Similarly, specific liminal spaces of resistance and transition identified as the *lakou*, the courtyard, the *batey* or the mangrove (to name but a few) in the texts under study help illustrate, on a microlevel, the broader potentials of thresholds as a theoretical framework for the Caribbean in translation. This tension between the experience of belonging, or paradoxically, of marginalization, is of primary concern when viewing the Caribbean as a series of alternate, repeating thresholds rather than firmly established, stable and secure homes. As Benítez-Rojo observes, the Caribbean offers a transdisciplinary and multimodal approach to the threshold as: '[the region] flows outward past the limits of its own sea […]. But what is it that repeats? Tropisms, in series; movements in approximate direction. Let's say the unforeseen relation between a dance movement and the baroque spiral of a colonial railing.'[68] Several themes emerging from this quote are associated with

[66] 'Threshold', *OED* <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/201231#eid18652781> [accessed 31 October 2015]

[67] 'Seuil', *CNRTL*: 'Du lat. d'époque impériale *solea* « sandale, garniture de sabot », et à basse époque « sorte de plancher » influencé pour le genre et le sens par *solum*, v. *sol.*', see <http://www.cnrtl.fr/lexicographie/seuil> [accessed 31 October 2015]

[68] See Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island, The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, 2nd edn, trans. by James E. Maraniss (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 3. Glissant has also noted the baroque nature of Caribbean identity, by suggesting its call away from linearity, a characteristic that will be further analyzed in the digressive and subversive potential of footnotes in translation (ch. 4): 'L'art baroque fait appel au contournement, à la prolifération, à la redondance d'espace, à ce qui bafoue l'unicité

and pitted against other concepts developed by Caribbean thinkers to offer a fine-tuned definition of Caribbean thresholds.

The colonial experience is at the heart of the Caribbean where the plantation system has left its stamp on the landscape as well as on the languages spoken across the islands. In that regard, the threshold becomes a site of hybridity, a 'third space' which 'opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy', as shown by H. K. Bhabha.[69] In turn, the Caribbean threshold functions as a space articulating struggles, at times taking the form of underground resistance, at others taking that of subversive ploys. Liminality works hand in hand with the notion of orality, as the threshold advocates its own language, situated in between imposed (often written) norms and the unruly flow of the spoken word, or as a Haitian proverb sums up: 'Palé fransé pa vlé di lespri'.[70] Such intrinsic resistance found throughout the Caribbean highlights a specificity of the region, which may be compared with similar, albeit different attempts at subverting official or dominant discourses in other postcolonial contexts, particularly in the Indian Ocean.[71] The Caribbean threshold in literature thus corresponds to the crossroads where written and oral forms meet, an intersection located halfway between official or dominant discourse and familiar tales, often told in private and to a community. Yet, the orality born in the Caribbean threshold does not coincide with a folklore that reduces Caribbean identity to some sort of 'doudouism' as the proponents of créolité have warned, but should rather take the form of a subtle, complex form expressing 'diversality'.[72] To bring to the fore Caribbean

prétendu d'un connu et d'un connaissant, à ce qui exalte la quantité reprise infiniment, la totalité à l'infini recommencée.' Édouard Glissant, *Poétique de la Relation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), p. 92.

[69] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 5.

[70] Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant, *Éloge de La Créolité = In Praise of Creoleness* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), p. 46.

[71] Peter Hawkins aims to address a gap in the case of the Mascarene Islands, which he considers as having been overlooked or remained in the shadow of French Caribbean literature. See Peter Hawkins, *The Other Hybrid Archipelago: Introduction to the Literatures and Cultures of the Francophone Indian Ocean* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2007). Chapter 6 will focus, in part, on the translation of David Dabydeen's *The Counting House* by Mauritian author Ananda Devi to investigate the possibility of a transoceanic continuum in the use of vernacular forms, particularly when writer and translator share common cultural roots.

[72] Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant pay homage to Glissant's Whole-World and define Caribbeanness as follows: 'We cannot reach Caribbeanness without interior vision. And interior vision is nothing without the unconditional acceptance of our Creoleness. We declare ourselves Creoles. We declare

identity and even advocate it, dwelling in the threshold of creolization thus seems inescapable. Yet, many writers from the Caribbean, regardless of the island they come from, have chosen to write either in English, French, Spanish or Dutch rather than in Creole. How do they manage, then, to still make Caribbean thresholds perceptible in their writings? Does it irrefutably inscribe their work within colonial, Eurocentric canons, as labels such as Francophonie tend to suggest? Or do they manage to 'dislocate' and do away with such norms to expose, instead, the problematic treatment of Caribbean realities when they are 'translated' for non-regional audiences? [73]

Positing the threshold as a point of intersection calls for the need to investigate it not only on spatial grounds, but also on historical and metaphysical levels, to test its validity as a zone of resistance constitutive of the Caribbean condition. To that end, several Caribbean authors have argued in favor of opacity, or what Glissant termed 'the right to obscurity' in his *Discours*.[74] Can the threshold then become a site of opacity that, paradoxically, invokes clarification of meaning when encountered in works of translation? Do authorial prefaces, notes or glossaries actually provide better legibility and guidance, as they might suggest, or do they promote obliqueness and strategies of opacity through a decentring of literary norms at one and the same time? Such tactics will be tested against translational practices to see how Caribbean techniques of 'oraliture' actually come to alter metropolitan literary standards and can help shift homogenizing tendencies to particularising approaches in translation, whilst raising inevitable questions of relocation and cultural transfer.[75]

A diverse range of literary texts has been chosen to try and embrace as large a vision as possible of the Caribbean. This entailed selecting texts from various genres – poetry, autobiographies, fiction taking the form of novels and short-stories – as well as from as many linguistic zones as possible, with a focus on Anglophone, Francophone and

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that Creoleness is the cement of our culture and that it ought to rule the foundations of our Caribbeanness.' (p. 87).

[73] In Chapter 2, the section focusing on David Dabydeen's unorthodox use of paratext in his collection of poems *Slave Song* (Peepal Tree Press) will address those particular issues.

[74] Édouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, 2nd edn, trans. and intro. by J. Michael Dash (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), p. 2.

[75] Patrick Chamoiseau, *Solibo Magnifique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), p. 170.

Hispanophone authors mostly, due to personal competences in those languages.[76] The corpus under study also includes texts produced, that is written, edited, published and targeted at readers from the Caribbean, to test the porosity of literary circulation both on an international and on a regional level. As the central concern of this project revolves around the notion of thresholds, it seemed infelicitous to restrict the field of research to one specific linguistic area of the Caribbean, let alone to one particular set of texts, as the relationships between author, reader and translator have previously been hinted at and shall be further analysed in accordance with genre variations depending, notably, on the so-called expectations of the putative reader. The insularity of some writers who have remained either in the Caribbean or have chosen to be published by small presses or local, alternative publishers has also determined their inclusion in the corpus alongside diasporic and/or internationally recognized writers. In fact, insofar as the threshold is studied as a *locus* of interaction, the discrepancies and similarities operating within those texts will offer broader considerations on a possible remapping of the Caribbean as a complex area of study, whose inclusion either in the Americas or within vertical colonial histories remains problematic. [77] On a macrolevel, Caribbean specificities furthermore expose the intricate circuits of global and, to a certain extent, regional translation, as they comply, at one and the same time, with the market of international literary circulation, whilst offering a foray into alternative routes of transversal diffusion for a literature that thrives in the contact zones of cultural resistance.

1.3. The Caribbean in translation: walking da tide-rope of in-betweenness

> Aujourd'hui, maman est morte. Ou peut-être hier, je ne sais pas. J'ai reçu un télégramme de l'asile : « Mère décédée. Enterrement demain. Sentiments

[76] Brief incursions will be made into the Dutch Caribbean. They will, however, remain rather scarce, by and large, due to a lack of language proficiency in Dutch or Papiamento, as well as to the limited access to literature from the islands of Aruba, Curacao, Sint Maarten, Bonaire, Saba, Sint Eustatius and the Republic of Suriname outside their confines and on the world literary market.

[77] Analyzing for instance the use of paratext in the translation of Caribbean texts could be compared with similar practices observed in Brazil, where such techniques have been assimilated with acts of cannibalism and correspond to a specific positionality on the part of the translator, whilst possibly finding echoes with strategies consisting in 'womanhandling', as previously noted.

distingués. » Cela ne veut rien dire. C'était peut-être hier. (Albert Camus, *L'Etranger*)

Jòdi-a, lanmò baré lamaté-a. Oben nè sa té yè, mwen pa pli sav. Man ftan risiswè an télégram di kay-granmoun la : « Manman ded. Lantèman dimen. Lonnè ek respé. » Sa pa vlé di hak. Nè sa te yè. (*Moun-Andéwò A*, by R. Confiant)[78]

Mama's still alive today.

She doesn't say anything now, but there are many tales she could tell. Unlike me: I've rehashed this story in my head so often, I almost can't remember it anymore. (Kamel Daoud, *The Meursault Investigation*, trans. from the French by John Cullen)[79]

The decision to open this section with liminal variations on Camus's canonical text, including the original, may seem somewhat unexpected. However, this choice was not made at random. It exemplifies, as will be argued, a poetics of the threshold promoting in-betweenness, and tests, at the same time, some of the limits of translatability, while attempting to create bridges that tie the Caribbean experience to other imaginaries. In that regard, focusing on Brathwaite's 'tidalectics' offers, first of all, an angle of vision into the cross-cultural poetics that will be advocated to reconsider non linear strategies in translation:

> And maroon Haiti has been itself marooned but it is a final failure only in the books: 'success' of dialectics: synthesis. For dialectics is another gun: a missile: a way of making progress: /farward/ but in the culture of the circle 'success' moves outward from the centre to circumference and back again: a tidal dialectic: an ital dialectic: continuum across the peristyle/ and so we have submerged again: and yet the

[78] Both quotes from *L'Etranger*, in its French and its creole versions were taken from *Caribmag 1* (octobre-novembre 2012), p. 24. In an interview conducted by Camille Dervaux, Confiant claims that it was his personal choice to translate Camus's canonical text to 'push creole to its limits so that it can express realities that are foreign to it' (my translation): 'c'est forcer le créole à se dépasser pour exprimer des réalités qui lui sont étrangères'. Camille Dervaux, 'Parole(s) d'insomniaque: entretien exclusif avec Raphaël Confiant', *CaribMag* 1 (2012), 18–26 (p. 20).

[79] Kamel Daoud, *The Meursault investigation*, trans. by John Cullen (London: OneWorld Publications, 2015), p. 1.

> *nam* remains: *waiting towards* its crisis for a new explosion.[80]

When explored in the light of organic life and nature, the threshold corresponds to an ambiguous site of creolization, in which hybridity operates both as a salutary agent of change and cross-fertilization (or 'cross-pollination', to quote André Brink), as well as a hazardous breeding ground for parasites which can ultimately cause the demise of endogenous species in their wake.[81] The Caribbean landscape, marked by various phases of colonial enterprise, presents the threshold as a zone of contamination in which hybridity is generally studied along different, if not antagonistic lines, depending on the field of study.[82] Equally ambiguous and problematic when applied to the translation of Caribbean literature, the threshold ultimately functions as a chronotope and no longer as a mere geographical space, in which the interconnections between nature and history, landscape and memory continue to be addressed nowadays, whilst raising issues of the handling of 'traces' (or scars) from the past.[83] Potentially, the translation of parasitic interferences found in Caribbean texts results in the resurfacing of heretofore silenced or

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[80] Brathwaite, 'Caribbean Culture – Two Paradigms', p. 42.

[81] 'Cross-pollination' is meant to echo André Brink's own use of the term to describe his bilingual creative process, in which English and Afrikaans versions are so intertwined that their clearly delineated contours as 'original' and 'translation' become blurred. As the South African author explains, both texts resonate with each other and contaminate each other. See *Intimate Enemies: Translation in Francophone Contexts*, K. Batchelor and C. Bisdorff, eds (p. 105), much in the vein of J. J. Rabearivelo's creative process, in which his bilingual poems, written in Malagasy and French, imply a similar simultaneity: 'D'après le manuscript, il semble avoir écrit chaque poème dans les deux langues, en français et en malgache, le même jour et dans une continuité, voire une simultanéité d'écriture'. Claire Riffard, 'Rabearivelo traducteur ou l'effet boomerang, *Études littéraires africaines*, 34 (2012), 29–41 (p. 39).

[82] In '"Poetics of Landscape": Édouard Glissant's Creolized Ecologies', Carine M. Mardorossian explains that 'cultural hybridity increases biodiversity whereas biotic hybridity often reduces it. The preservation or enhancement of biodiversity, in other words, often depends on management if not protectionism, principles whose application in human society typically threatens or seeks to contain social and cultural diversity.' To try and reconcile this longstanding opposition between postcolonial studies and ecocriticism, the author promotes instead Glissant's poetics, as it offers, according to her, an understanding of creolization that takes into account both its cultural and organic aspects (pp. 985-986). She mentions, among other key tenets of Glissant's work, his 'Manifeste pour refonder les DOM', a 'document [which] advocates turning the French Caribbean islands into "organic zones" that would revitalize local economies through ecotourism and the production of organic and artisanal products (Prieto 244)'. Mardorossian, '"Poetics of Landscape": Édouard Glissant's Creolized Ecologies', p. 988.

[83] See in particular Chapter 3 on that point.

marginal voices now attempting to fill up the blanks of national or regional state narratives.[84]

In the context of publishing practices, the presence of footnotes, glossaries and other alterations linked with the transfer of a text into another language often testify to the impossibility of finding perfect equivalences in the receptor culture.[85] Paratextual elements present in the corpus of selected texts stress the underlying links between territory and language or landscape and history, taking at times the forms of assimilation, or even recalling ethnographic trends, or, on the contrary, signalling strategies of re-appropriation in the form of mimetic or cannibalistic practices.[86] Yet, thresholds do not limit themselves to appended material often suggested by the publishers themselves, as previously suggested. Thresholds also take the form of interlinear interventions, which, for all intents and purposes, can be read as manifestations of performance and counterpoints, destabilizing and subversive incursions or sites of self-translation and reflection. Be it as it may, liminality questions the complex phenomena at work in the translation of Caribbean literature, not so much to decry the sense of partiality or bias frequently associated with translators, but rather to highlight their equivocal status as gatekeepers, as well as the contradictions inherent in Caribbean cultures and traditions. If the threshold further exposes the crevice of in-betweenness defining the Caribbean, it also instrumentalizes this rift through the act of translation, revealing the translator's agency, who, 'like Houdini or Albinus, [may] manipulate the "hinges of discourse'' at leisure when he exposes his persona'.[87] Inevitably, the threshold bears such contradictions as trying to clarify while retaining the author's wish to remain opaque. It therefore recalls constraints such as can be encountered in a buffer zone, whereby the mediator (translator)

[84] In that context, digressions will be studied both in the form of overt, subversive footnotes and parenthetical comments in Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (Chapter 3).

[85] The term 'receptor culture' shall henceforth be preferred over 'target language' as it implies deeper connections with the notion of hospitality which will be discussed further down in this section.

[86] The Brazilian concept of cannibalization of texts as a means of re-appropriation of the canon through the act of translation will be of particular assistance when looking at *Isla Negra*'s editorial line (see Chapter 7).

[87] Beci Dobbin refers here more precisely to Vladimir Nabokov's disruptive incursions, as highlighted in '"The Queer Part Doors Play" in Nabokov's *Laughter in the Dark'*. In similar fashion, it could be argued that the translator (perhaps even more so in the case of the self-translator) walks a similar tight-rope of self-assertion when dealing with a Caribbean text, as this type of literature often demands the translator's positionality on the choice of a vernacular, for instance. See *Thinking on Thresholds: The Poetics of Transitive Spaces*, p. 40.

needs to facilitate the exchanges between messenger (original text and its author) and recipient (reader).

Furthermore, the threshold helps demonstrate what Claire Bisdorff has suggested in her article 'Translating the Poetics of Glissant and Walcott': 'Caribbean linguistic reality means different languages have no fixed borders but constitute a contact zone, allowing one language to define itself by means of the presence of another, so creating fertile aesthetic ground.'[88] Following this line of thought, translational thresholds constitute a site of exploration for a poetics of in-betweenness and reciprocity. In response to Ricoeur's notion of hospitality, translation will be considered as a welcoming gesture, bearing its own set of rules and conditions, an art that eventually allows the contours of Caribbean thresholds to be redrawn as sites of conviviality, in keeping with the works of scholars such as Ottmar Ette or Paul Gilroy but in dialogue with Glissant's own poetics of Relation.[89] Thus, rather than signalling a system of 'perfect equivalency', this poetics promotes instead one of correspondences that ultimately permeate both original and receptor cultures in the hope of creating in-between zones of conviviality.[90] An example that is proof of such a strategy might be useful at this point. In his English translation of Juan Bosch's short-story 'Encarnación Mendoza's Christmas Eve', John Gilmore footnotes the term *batey*, which is explained as follows:

> [1] *Batey* is a word of Amerindian origin, which originally meant a ceremonial ball-court. In the Hispanic Caribbean it has come to mean the area on a large plantation occupied by living accommodation for workers and shops for their use, as well as the sugar factory and related buildings. The

[88] *Caribbeing: Comparing Caribbean Literatures and Cultures*, ed. by K. Van Haesendonck and T. D'haen (Amsterdam, NY: Rodopi, 2014), p. 325.

[89] Paul Ricoeur, *On Translation*, trans. by Eileen Brennan and intro. by Richard Kearney (Abingdon, England; New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), p. 10: 'Linguistic hospitality, then, where the pleasure of dwelling in the other's language is balanced by the pleasure of receiving the foreign word at home, in one's own welcoming house'. For a definition of conviviality, see Paul Gilroy's preface to *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?*: 'It introduces a measure of distance from the pivotal term 'identity', which has proved to be such an ambiguous resource in the analysis of race, ethnicity, and politics. The radical openness that brings conviviality alive makes a nonsense of closed, fixed, and reified identity and turns attention toward the always-unpredictable mechanisms of identification.' Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), p. xi.

[90] Such conviviality can take the form of transcolonial expressions of creolization as will be studied in Chapter 6.

> nearest equivalent in the Anglophone Caribbean would be 'plantation yard', but this is not quite the same thing as, after the end of slavery, workers in the Eastern Caribbean islands did not normally live in the immediate vicinity of the mill or factory.[91]

The footnote here operates as a binding space of culture, since it exemplifies a system of correspondences rather than perfect, transparent adequacy ('the nearest equivalent'), and underscores a Hispanic specificity within the Caribbean, while taking into consideration realities from the receptor culture, the Anglophone Caribbean (or a broader Anglophone readership), without transplanting one reality onto another. In other words, the threshold encountered here is one of differentiation, recalling Augusto de Campos's own conception of translation as a process 'searching for identity not in the area of sameness but in the area of difference.'[92] Such a strategy can be opposed to one of difference which would consist in stressing the Caribbean as Other and not as part of a wider Anglophone context. Instead, the translator has opted for a footnote translating similarity whilst departing from strategies of assimilation ('not quite the same'). In a similar fashion and in the light of the corpus selected for this thesis, translational thresholds come to either bypass or, on the contrary, reinforce the tight borders of national identities, depending mainly on their response(s) to Caribbean particularities.

Ultimately, however, the threshold articulates Caribbean resistance in the face of globalization and allows the region to be presented as a unique locus of unpredictable patterns that repeat themselves, yet in difference, in its manifold interfaces. Seen from such an angle, the translator's own familiarity with the Caribbean and his capacity to render its orality, its varied rhythms or its cultural references become fruitful sites of investigation. A close study of paratextual elements helps to demonstrate that in most cases the author's or translator's expertise in Caribbeanness is stressed, suggesting a form of endorsement of a given work, as if he were somehow putting his seal of approval on

[91] Translation published in *The Oxford Book of Caribbean Short Stories*, ed. by S. Brown and J. Wickham, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 70–79 (p. 70).
[92] Gentzler, *Translation and Identity in the Americas: New Directions in Translation Theory*, p. 99.

the translation, oftentimes by dint of a foreword or of a blurb found on highly visible, hence strategic spaces such as the cover or the dust jacket of the book.

Translation is therefore grounded in politics, all the more so when a text emerging from the margins of one's territory or recalling one's own colonial past is at stake. Daoud's rewriting of Camus's *L'Étranger* or Confiant's transposition of it in Creole offer examples of such strategies of re-appropriation.[93] Likewise, by stressing the untranslatability of certain Caribbean traits, or their impossible direct transferability, the translator brings to mind the 'double consciousness' deeply ingrained in the colonial experience, as ascertained by DuBois and further developed by scholars, among which Fanon or Gilroy.[94] As such, the threshold corresponds to a site where similar duality unfolds, whilst drawing a parallel with the translator's own role as a liminal figure, a gatekeeper who can either regulate and tighten, or on the contrary, welcome and let in the use of vernacular in a translation, thereby calling into question the *raison d'être* of national languages and discourses.[95] After all, as Dabydeen's narrator Mungo keeps suggesting in his neoslave narrative *The Harlot's Progress*, Mr. Pringle, supposed to write down a 'proper' version of his memoirs, only serves as the freed slave's foil – his translator of sorts, really – who highlights the discrepancy between the propriety of the Englishman's penmanship and the unseemliness of the former slave's gibberish: 'I don't

[93] At this point in the chapter, Glissant's observation on the alleged 'transparency' of Camus's text seems inevitable to illustrate how Confiant's work of creolization of the original may actually restore its underlying zones of opacity: 'Les œuvres littéraires qu'on choisit pour l'apprentissage d'une langue sont de préférence celles qui répondent le mieux à un supposé patron de la langue ; non pas les plus « faciles », mais celles qui sont réputées porteuses du minimum d'opacité menaçante. C'était le cas des textes d'Albert Camus dans les années 1960 pour les étudiants étrangers en France. Cas révélateur d'un contre sens fondamental, le texte de Camus n'étant qu'en apparence clair et limpide. L'apprentissage qui s'appuyait sur cet axiome de clarté faisait l'impasse sur le drame situationnel que les événements d'Algérie avaient noué en Camus et qui retentissait sur la structure serrée, fiévreuse, retenue du style qu'il avait adopté, pour se confier tout en se retirant.' (Édouard Glissant, *Poétique de la Relation*, p. 130). It would therefore be of interest to see if Confiant has recourse to paratext or in-gloss alterations to potentially position the threshold as a site of revelation, exposing at it may the source text's foundations.

[94] Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*, p. 164 and pp. 166–168.

[95] Gentzler underscores the problematic nature of the term 'official language' when studying the case of the Americas in which European languages were imported and imposed upon native peoples: 'Although the nation-states of the Americas tend to use European languages as "official languages", those respective languages are by no means original national languages.' (*Translation and Identity in the Americas: New Directions in Translation Theory*, p. 5).

know nothing, so let Mr Pringle tell it as he want to, of Lord and Lady Montague, and I will shut my rambling mouth whilst he properize and give them pedigree, and make me present, and make of me a present to you, grateful reader […]'.[96] Some questions remain, then, regarding the agency of the translator: is (s)he supposed to act as a sanitary agent of 'properization', and what happens if (s)he doesn't? To what extent is the discrepancy between expected forms of propriety in language and the vernaculars actually encountered in the texts evocative of a 'double consciousness'? Such interrogations initiate further reflection on where fragmentation should be situated when dealing with translation. If diglossia, for example, is transferred into one of the receptor culture's own dialects, doesn't the original run the risk of being relocated in the process? On the other hand, when maintaining the original Caribbean setting, the translator is often led to opt for means of clarification of the text, which can prove counterintuitive to strategies of opacity and obliqueness previously alluded to.

When looking at translational thresholds from the angle of 'transculturation', Western and Caribbean thought can be put in dialogue with each other, inasmuch as the reader is offered a glimpse at how the Caribbean is adapted for a given receptor culture, whilst remaining displaced or not quite fully assimilated.[97] Mignolo claims that 'while *acculturation* pointed toward cultural changes in only one direction, the *transculturation* corrective was meant to call attention to the complex and multidirectional processes in cultural transformation.'[98] Similarly, translation can be considered as a prismatic movement capable of offering a transdisciplinary angle on the Caribbean, a phenomenon which will be observed in the liminal spaces of the selected texts. To that end, advocating thresholds as unique sites of study, anchored both in precise spatial locations, but also on more metaphysical and historical levels, as they also correspond to rhetorical, discursive *loci*, as has been noted before, call for new definitions of the Caribbean specificity both within and outside European frameworks. The threshold invites a reflection that hinges on the transfer of texts both in terms of incorporation and resistance, or entry into or

[96] David Dabydeen, *A Harlot's Progress* (London, Vintage: 2000), p. 186.
[97] Fernando Ortíz's concept of 'transculturation', which appeared in *Contrapunteo cubano des tabaco y el azúcar* shall be taken into consideration as well as, for instance, other scholars' reading of the term.
[98] Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*, p. 167.

departure from a given standard. 'Originals' are thus meant to be read alongside translations, either in the same language – but aimed at different readers (taking for example a Spanish translation, but published in different Hispanic settings) or reproduced over time[99] – or published in different languages. Translation then becomes a never-ending, necessary and multidirectional movement, a rite of passage of sorts in which readers may experience multiple transitions in their cross-cultural reading of the Caribbean in translation. Emerging therefore in a complex rhizomatic dynamics, the Caribbean eventually partakes in a poetics of 'unpredictability', whilst illustrating Glissant's own definition of translation as an 'art de la fugue'.[100] If non-Caribbean readers can feel hampered by unknown cultural references in need of explanatory paratext in order to facilitate their reading experience, thereby justifying the instrumentalization of the threshold as a site of intercultural transfer, liminality also stages some of the key features of Caribbean refusals to obey a poetics of the straight line. Caribbean-originated cultural and literary thought have produced schools of thought and artistic trends that have wished to do away with a Western teleological tradition, promoting instead a Caribbean specificity situating itself within a poetics of obliqueness relying on oral strategies such as digressions, counterpoints and polyphony. In literature, such attempts have spawned various movements, such as Spiralism in Haiti, centred around complex natural phenomena which have refashioned Caribbean landscapes as dynamic forces and endless patterns of unpredictability.[101] Ultimately, such a reconfiguration of the threshold, understood as a non-linear, rugged coastline where cultures intersect, would help rethink the Caribbean in a truly multilingual, multicultural and transdisciplinary fashion. The focus of such disciplines as comparative or world literature would then be shifted beyond the dictates of monolingualism, where texts are often read as 'translated' objects but not in actual translation, which would imply such movements as previously alluded to. In other words, such a poetics of liminality would amount to accepting to stand on the

[99] Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* and several of its (re)translations will serve as a case in point on that particular aspect (see Chapter 4).

100 In 'Traduire: relire, relier', *Actes 11èmes Assises de la traduction en Arles* (Arles: Actes Sud, 1994), pp. 25–30, Glissant associates translation with the act/art of running away and unavoidable forms of relinquishment.

[101] Benitez-Rojo's *Repeating Island* comes to mind here, particularly his definition of Caribbean people as 'Peoples of the Sea' which has led this contribution to investigate the ocean as a potential transcultural threshold between the Caribbean and Mascarenes islands through the act of translation (see Chapter 6).

thresholds of the Caribbean in translation, ready to cross them at liberty, but also willing to dwell in their instability. That is, accepting to walk the tight-rope of in-betweenness.

Such an approach poses numerous challenges, not only in terms of expectations on the part of the reader, but also in terms of the strategies and risks taken on the part of the translator. However, given the scope and size of this project, focus will mostly remain on the Caribbean itself and how it is carried across for metropolitan readers. That being said, investigating phenomena of translation within the Caribbean itself, focusing on specific, local publishing strategies as well as on non-textual modes of transfer provides an undeniably rich and complementary contribution to the present study, as field research at *Isla Negra Editores* in Puerto Rico has shown.[102] Ultimately, notions of gain and loss can be reappraised, no longer in the light of commercial interests or translational mishaps or findings, but rather in terms of cultural diversity and what that entails in the development of one's identity. Thresholds may eventually reach a zone where translatability and its sites of resistance transform into a wealth of multimodal representations, conjuring up new venues of experiencing and researching the Caribbean and translation alike.

Far from sounding the death knell of disciplines such as comparative literature or denouncing the homogenizing effects of others (world or global literature), a theoretical framework articulated around the thresholds encountered in the Caribbean brings about in its wake the redefinition of territories as archipelagoes. Unexpected turns and associations, opening up divides and boundaries then re-situate the Caribbean at the crossroads of reconciliation, whereby thresholds usually call attention to reciprocal forms of representation. Their transformative potential contributes a unique stance as to how differentiation works on cultural representations, situated as they are and serving as they do as a breeding ground of encounters.[103] In fact, it is worth remembering that when

[102] The outcome of this research has been the object of further analysis in Chapter 7 and elsewhere.

[103] Stuart Hall's reading of cultural representations no longer in terms of a fixed set of shared references but rather as a shifting, incessantly redefined process of becoming (of which Caribbeanness is a prime example) addresses similar issues as the concept of thresholds in this thesis lays claim to. Such reading would therefore provide interesting comparisons with translational practices calling for differentiation. Hall notes for instance that '[c]ultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a *positioning*. Hence, there is always

reading a note, a preface or an entry from a glossary, the reader can learn at least as much about the Caribbean as he does about his own culture with respect to the perception and reception of Otherness it conveys. Such observations further illustrate translation as a dynamic process of correspondences and dialogues, whose full creative potential entails, as has been underscored in this chapter, a poetics of differentiation, a poetics of translation that archipelizes *loci* of cultural representations, a poetics performed by a denizen of the threshold, a maroon inhabiting the rim of cultures, revitalizing the 'parole de nuit'[104].

a politics of identity, a politics of position which has no absolute guarantee in an unproblematic, transcendental 'law of origin'.' Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. by J. Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), pp. 222–237 (p. 226).

[104] The expression appears in a collection of West Indian texts entitled *Écrire la « parole de nuit », La nouvelle littérature antillaise*, ed. and intro. by Ralph Ludwig (Paris: Gallimard, 1994).

2. Authenticating the Caribbean: thresholds of (re)appropriations and (dis)locations

As has been argued in the liminal chapter of this thesis, a theoretical model of thresholds such as Genette's finds some limits when it comes to the study of translation, all the more so when it comes to so vast and complex a field as Caribbean literature, especially when not limited to one specific linguistically-bound area, whether it is considered as a united or fragmented entity, depending on the point of view. In turn, this chapter will pay specific attention to paratextual material located either before the text itself, taking the form of prefaces, introductions, or forewords mostly, or after the author's work in the case of afterwords, endnotes or glossaries, mainly. The aim here is to show how those opening or closing paratextual spaces can offer a remapping of Caribbean literature that aims at authenticating the region and its original literary production, whilst (re)establishing pan-Caribbean filiations, at times in reaction to global or Western genealogies, at others in compliance with them. Thresholds will therefore be studied as sites of (re)appropriation that entail a need to relocate Caribbean literature away from previously established classifications and cartographies of regional literary production, but also within a certain global literary heritage, as most of the books under study have been published for non-regional audiences, or at least not expressly, let alone exclusively for them. In the process, the power of thresholds to act as sites of dislocation will be tested to see whether Caribbean (re)presentations only serve as a pretext for different strategies that aim at framing the authors and their work, or whether the pre-text (or post-scriptum) manages, conversely, to regenerate the text, precisely by disrupting and subverting some heretofore respected rules and conventions. To do so, prefatorial matter has been chosen according to various degrees of visibility and legitimacy. As such, prominent writers, scholars and translators of variable experience and recognition will make their entrance onto the thresholds of the texts selected for this chapter.

2.1. Pre/postfacing or the art of endorsing Caribbean literature in translation

Nowadays, marketing and advertising strategies have become key aspects of a writer's journey through the publishing industry. Book covers usually abound in blurbs,

illustrations or comments that have the purpose of attracting the reader and thus selling copies. Books have increasingly become objects of consumption and within such a market, postcolonial literature holds a specific place, as several studies have already shown.[105] Very often, Caribbean literature that circulates worldwide falls into the rubric of exotic literature and can be packaged precisely as such to appeal to a potential reader seeking Otherness, particularly by mainstream publishers for whom this type of literature has specific market currency. Yet, the purpose of this chapter is precisely to undermine such strategies by stressing, instead, the counter-discursive practices observed within the paratextual elements under study to circumvent folkloristic approaches to Caribbean literature. In fact, relative attention will be paid to the book covers themselves, unless they serve a particular function that reinforces (or, perhaps, stands in contrast with) the content developed in the prefatorial matter.[106] This chapter will first focus on three editions of Barbara Bray's English translations of Simone Schwarz-Bart's *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle* and *Ti Jean L'horizon*, in which the translator's presence is at times little, if at all perceived, and at others explicitly acknowledged, depending on the publishing strategies. Regardless of this fluctuating visibility, it is interesting to note that Bray's voice is nowhere to be heard in the paratext that surrounds her translations, despite her level of literary fame and recognition on the British literary scene.[107] Instead, pride of place is given to a prominent writer such as Jamaica Kincaid, who signed the preface to the most recent edition of Schwarz-Bart's *The Bridge of Beyond*, still with Bray's translation of *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle*. This absence of the translator's voice on the thresholds of the texts will be pitted against the higher visibility granted to two other

[105] See Richard Watts's *Packaging Post/Coloniality: The Manufacture of Literary Identity in the Francophone World* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005) or Graham Huggan's *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (London: Routledge, 2001).

[106] This chapter can thus be read alongside the studies mentioned in the previous footnote. Whilst both mainstream editions and small, at times independent publishers of Caribbean fiction have been selected, one of the main purposes of this thesis is to underscore transversal, hence non-vertical models of literary circulation. As such, alternatives to traditional Western commercial strategies have guided this work to propose an archipelagic, pan-Caribbean model of literary promotion and circulation, whilst taking into account global exigencies. See chapters 6 & 7.

[107] 'As well as being the principal translator of Marguerite Duras, she was instrumental in introducing British readers to many of the other great figures of 20th-century French literature, among them Sartre, Anouilh, Genet, Amin Maalouf, Ismail Kadare and Tahar Ben Jelloun. She won the Scott Moncrieff prize for translation four times.' 'Obituary', 18 April 2010, *The Telegraph* [accessed 1st March 2017]

women translators, Linda Coverdale and Rose-Myriam Réjouis, for their respective work on Patrick Chamoiseau's *Chronicle of the Seven Sorrows* and *Solibo Magnificent*, but also on René Philoctète's *Massacre River* for the former and Marie Vieux-Chauvet's *Love, Anger, Madness*, for the latter.[108] Furthermore, translational paratext, which, as will be seen, is often relegated to the back of the book, taking the form of a Translator's Note or an afterword, will be analysed alongside allographic prefaces, mostly undertaken by prominent, internationally recognized writers from the Caribbean, such as Edwidge Danticat, Jamaica Kincaid or Edouard Glissant, if not by scholars specialising in Caribbean or Postcolonial Studies.[109] It would thus appear that 'liminal' matter (whether it opens or concludes the texts at hand) tends to (re)create pan-Caribbean filiations that could be interpreted as attempts to authenticate and thereby rehabilitate the literature of a region that otherwise runs the risk of being framed by ethnocentric norms or packaged (and consumed) as an exotic product. To that end, this chapter will examine the extent to which the thresholds of the text can become highly ritualistic sites where translators, scholars and writers alike can collaborate to initiate new rites of passage in a joint attempt to ensure the passing down of new and, to some degree, revised literary traditions for the Caribbean, whilst acknowledging and giving credit to its foundational voices. Arnold van Gennep's classification of *Rites of Passage* will serve as a model for the structure of this analysis, in which prefaces, afterwords and their derivative forms will be identified according to three types of space: sites where 'preliminary rites' occur, to begin with, that is where distancing from previous literary heritage takes place; then where 'liminary rites' can be observed, corresponding to a transition phase marked by formal and thematic ambiguity as well as instability, before new pan-Caribbean (af)filiations can eventually emerge in what would correspond to a third and final 'postliminal' phase.[110] Van

[108] In the case of Rose-Myriam Réjouis it should be noted that both her translations of Chamoiseau's *Solibo Magnificent* and Marie Vieux-Chauvet's *Love, Anger, Madness* were done jointly with Val Vinokurov, although she is the only signatory of the afterword or introductory note opening both translations.

[109] Although not technically a translation, the 2015 publication of *Gouverneurs de la Rosée* by *Éditions Passage(s*) offers an interesting example of a 'Francophone classic' reedited and to a certain extent re-contextualized and thus 'translated' for French contemporary readers by Marc Brudzinski, who provides an 'avant-propos', a personal note and bibliographical 'orientations' that frame Jacques Roumain's novel.

[110] See Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. by M. B. Vizedom and G. L. Caffee (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960).

Gennep's framework will serve as a possible entry into thresholds to put the fields of translation and anthropology in dialogue with each other. Liminal zones will therefore be analyzed in their territorial (spatial) dimension in the texts, as well as in what they entail in terms of cultural and/or social changes brought about by the authorial, editorial and translational rituals performed.[111]

2.1.1. (Re)creating pan-Caribbean filiations

In *Creating Postcolonial Literature: African Writers and British Publishers*, Caroline Davis analyses how British publishers contributed to the creation and promotion of African literature during phases of decolonization already under way on the African continent in the 1960s, and focuses more specifically on Oxford University Press and their series, Three Crowns, to highlight the processes of selection – entailing inclusion as well as exclusion of certain titles – and dissemination that guided the publisher's marketing strategies at the time.[112] In her study, Davis also mentions Heinemann's role in the publication of African literature, particularly in relation to Chinua Achebe's own involvement with them as a local agent of literary circulation, as he played a crucial part in the selection of texts to be published, although 'fundamentally, Heinemann's policy paralleled that of OUP: the final editorial decision was made in London by British editors'.[113] Whilst this thesis does not focus on African literature per se, it nonetheless includes Simone Schwarz-Bart's *Between Two Worlds*, in other words, Barbara Bray's translation of *Ti Jean L'horizon*, published by Heinemann in 1992 as part of their Caribbean Writers Series. As has been noted, little visibility is granted to the translator in this edition; yet, the paratextual elements located at the end of the book, which promote

[111] Van Gennep establishes a direct parallel between spatial movement and social change, stating that 'a change of social categories involves a change of residence', often taking the form of liminal crossings. *Ibid*., p. 192.
[112] 'Three Crowns was initially a series specialising in African history, politics and development, and its authors were mainly British expatriates based in Africa. Its name was derived from the three crowns on Oxford University's coat of arms, which had appeared on OUP publications since the seventeenth century. The series was first established in 1961 by David Neale, and remained under his overall management until 1966. Rex Collings was the series editor from 1962 to 1965, and was responsible for developing the list, although Neale had to approve all new acquisitions.' Caroline Davis, *Creating Postcolonial Literature: African Writers and British Publisher* (Basingstoke, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 94–95.
[113] *Ibid*., p. 104.

other titles published in the series, participate in creating pan-Caribbean literary filiations, all the more so as various islands and territories of the region are mentioned, among which Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, or again Jamaica and the Eastern Caribbean. Interestingly, Myriam Warner-Vieyra's *Juletane* stands out in this selection of titles as the sole novel published in translation: 'This is the first translation of a powerful feminist novel that spans the African and Caribbean literary traditions.'[114] Feminist writing is also stressed in the editorial blurb here, a characteristic that is found in the tribute that Jamaica Kincaid pays to Simone Schwarz-Bart and her novel *The Bridge of Beyond*, that was translated, once again, by Barbara Bray. This time, not only is the author presented as a leading figure amongst generations of women writers and scholars,[115] she is also depicted as a Caribbean spokesperson for female voices: 'As if from out of the blue, from the Great Beyond, from the margins, a woman from Guadeloupe has given us an unforgettable hymn to the resilience and power of women.'[116] This acknowledgment on the part of Jamaica Kincaid can be further associated with her laudatory comments on the translation, whereby the (woman) translator's work is not only acknowledged, but also praised as a perfectly pitched voice heard over that of Schwarz-Bart's ('the book's wonderfully evocative and memorable opening paragraph, as conveyed from the original French by the extraordinary translator Barbara Bray'[117]). In contrast with a previous edition of *The Bridge of Beyond*[118], where no mention whatsoever was made of the translator's work (apart from her name briefly cited on the title page of the book), this latter edition also includes a blurb by Maryse Condé on its back cover, where both author and translator are associated with one another and similarly praised: 'Simone Schwarz-Bart's incantatory prose, interwoven with Creole proverbs and lore, appears here in a remarkable translation by Barbara Bray'.[119] However, Bray's voice is nowhere to be heard in the liminary (paratextual) spaces of those three translations, despite her recognition on the British

[114] Simone Schwarz-Bart, *Between Two Worlds*, trans. by Barbara Bray (London: Heinemann, 1992), no pages provided for this section of the book.
[115] Bridget Jones was a specialist of Francophone Caribbean Literature and is mentioned p. ix, for example.
[116] Jamaica Kincaid, introduction to Simone Schwarz-Bart's *The Bridge of Beyond* (New York: New York Review Books, 2013), p. xii.
[117] *Ibid*., p. xviii.
[118] Simone Schwarz-Bart, *The Bridge of Beyond* (London: Gollancz, 1975).
[119] Simone Schwarz-Bart, *The Bridge of Beyond* (New York: New York Review Books, 2013)

literary scene both as an editor and as a translator of French literature.[120] Perhaps, this relative 'invisibility' can be linked to Bray's lack of obvious connections with Caribbean literature, unlike prominent figures like Jamaica Kincaid and Maryse Condé who are immediately identified as legitimate voices from the region. In 'De la proposition de traduire en langue caraïbe les œuvres caribéennes comme mode d'affirmation de la perception d'une idée commune', Corinne Mencé-Caster notes the intricate relationship between authenticity and legitimacy when translating Caribbean literature, and interrogates, by the same token, the validity of a politics of translation that would consist in advocating the sole intervention of local or regional specialists:

> Faut-il dès lors voir dans la revendication d'une traduction des œuvres caribéennes par des traducteurs caribéens, un simple réflexe « protectionniste » lié à une angoisse quasi paranoïaque de la trahison ? Ou, au contraire, une insolence d'intellectuels et d'hommes de lettres, déçus par une pratique traductrice aux relents centripètes, niant l'altérité du texte et cherchant donc à cloisonner là où c'est précisément la volonté de décloisonnement qui domine, qui s'affirme ?[121]

Such accreditation is in fact also stressed by renowned translator Richard Philcox, who, in his retranslation of Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* brings to the fore not only his familiarity with the Caribbean whilst acknowledging his Britishness,[122] but also his intimacy with the region through his ties to one of its canonical authors none other than his wife, Maryse Condé: 'And then there is that secret feeling that married to a writer

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[120] Perhaps such recognition only came posthumously or in relation to other writers such as Samuel Beckett with whom she had intimate connections. See <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2010/mar/04/barbara-bray-obituary> [accessed 18 December 2017]. For more information, also see <https://rhystranter.com/2015/06/16/samuel-beckett-and-barbara-bray-a-new-documentary/> or <http://www.georgehunka.com/beckett/rue-samuel-beckett/> [accessed 15 December 2017]. It should also be noted that by the time the 2013 edition of *The Bridge of Beyond* published by the New York Review Books came out, Barbara Bray had already passed away.

[121] Corinne Mencé-Caster, 'De la proposition de traduire en langue caraïbe les œuvres caribéennes comme mode d'affirmation de la perception d'une idée commune', *Écritures caraïbes*, ed. by Georges Voisset and Marc Gontard (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2002), pp. 29-36 (p. 34).

[122] 'I suppose I first met Frantz Fanon when I went to Africa, to Senegal in 1968 as an English teacher. At the age of twenty-three I was a naïve young Englishman leading a sheltered life who was about to discover the meaning of underdevelopment and colonization. My vision of Africa was nil and I had as much insight into Senegalese society as a brochure at a travel agent.' Richard Philcox, 'On Retranslating Fanon, Retrieving a Lost Voice', in Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. by Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2004), p. 241.

from Guadeloupe, from the French Caribbean, I have always known Fanon and understood his dilemma and ambition as a Martinican'.[123] Such level of intimacy with the French Caribbean is raised by Philcox as a mark of his credentials or his legitimacy to retranslate Fanon, whose work had been misunderstood up until then according to him, as suggested by the title chosen by the translator for his afterword. In fact, 'On Retranslating Fanon, Retrieving a Lost Voice' functions very much as a threshold of self-accreditation for the translator who distances himself from previous translations of Fanon's work, whilst grounding his own work as a necessary transition towards a revised understanding of Fanon's original voice. As Philcox argues:

> Translating a dead man means stepping very warily through a minefield littered with the debris of another time and another translation. But the very fact of looking back was a driving force to modernize the text and look ahead. […] Retranslating Fanon, rewriting Fanon almost gives me the same kick. As if I am the one writing down his thoughts in English for the first time.[124]

Far from being invisible, the translator fully inhabits the threshold from which he expresses himself here; furthermore, Philcox's afterword presents his task as a translator as a complete process of initiation, as the three rites of passage identified by van Gennep can be clearly identified in the extract. Philcox starts by establishing a clear demarcation from previous translations of Fanon's *Damnés de la terre* and his (initial phase that corresponds to van Gennep's 'preliminary rite'), before he situates his own work at the crossroads of history and modernity ('looking back was a driving force to modernize the text and look ahead')[125], to eventually reach a 'postliminal' state of transcendence, whereby Fanon's text is claimed to be regenerated and given new life. The threshold under study therefore becomes akin to a stage, where Philcox the translator performs a ritual of ostentatious interaction with a probable, yet mute reader, during which he claims to superimpose his voice to that of Fanon's in an attempt to achieve mutual consecration.

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[123] *Ibid*., pp. 250–251.

[124] *Ibid*., p. 250. For further information on Philcox's translation of Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* and the presence of various levels of thresholds in this volume ('Forewords, Prefaces and Introductions and the Layering of Obfuscations'), see Nigel C. Gibson's 'Relative Opacity: A New Translation of Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* – Mission Betrayed or Fulfilled?', *Social Identities*, 13, 1 (January 2007), pp. 69–95.

[125] This second, transitory phase corresponding to the 'liminal rite' in Van Gennep's terminology.

If Philcox's conspicuous position here can be read alongside his own political and ideological agenda as a translator of Caribbean literature,[126] one may wonder whether translational paratext could similarly serve as a *locus* of alternative rites of passage, whereby new feminist filiations could emerge. As has been noted, Kincaid's introduction to Schwarz-Bart's *The Bridge of Beyond* weaves new lines of genealogy for Caribbean literature, whereby female voices are presented as the central proponents of a strong communal identity.[127] Similarly, could it be argued that prefatorial matter helps promote, if not altogether 'patent' translational feminist strategies, whilst concomitantly aiming at liberating Caribbean literature from conventional and/or paternalistic models of reading? If so, when voicing themselves from the outskirts of the text, do women (or 'feminist'[128]) translators not partake in a redefinition of liminality from which new rites (as well as rights) of passage emerge?

2.1.2. Labours of love on the limens of 'transformance'

The translator is female,
even if she is sometimes a male.[129]

'Feminist' translators are not necessarily 'women' translators, as stated by Suzanne Jill Levine and argued by some feminist translation theorists and practitioners.[130] In the

[126] 'I am one of those translators who is constantly thinking of the readership, and placing the language in the twenty-first century. A vivid example of this is my new translation of Frantz Fanon's *Les Damnés de la Terre* and *Peau Noire Masques Blancs* where I have modernized the vocabulary for the twenty-first-century reader.', Richard Philcox, 'Fidelity, Infidelity and the Adulterous Translator', *Australian Journal of French Studies*, 47,1 (Jan/Apr 2010), 29–35 (p. 34).

[127] 'As if from out of the blue, from the Great Beyond, from the margins, a woman from Guadeloupe has given us an unforgettable hymn to the resilience and power of women.', Jamaica Kincaid, 'Introduction', in Simone Schwarz-Bart, *The Bridge of Beyond*, trans. by Barbara Bray (New York: New York Review Books, 2013), p. xii.

[128] The term is used by Eva C. Karpinski in her article adopting a genetic approach to Barbara Godard's translations of Nicole Brossard's texts, in which she briefly lists Canada's major 'feminist' translators, including 'Howard Scott, le seul homme qui se définissait comme étant un traducteur féministe'. Eva C. Karpinski, 'Choix, chances, changements: travailler dans les archives des Barbara Godard traductrice', *Traduire: Genèse du choix*, Chiara Montini ed. (Paris: Éditions des archives contemporaines, 2016), pp. 23–36 (p. 25).

[129] Suzanne Jill Levine, cited in Albert Bensoussan's *Confessions d'un traître: essai sur la traduction* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 1995), p. 41.

[130] See previous footnote.

introduction to his translation of Luis Rafael Sánchez's *La Guaracha del Macho Camacho*, published under the title of *Macho Camacho's Beat*, Gregory Rabassa uses the threshold of the text as an entrance hall into the residency of his translation process. Rabassa not only introduces his wife to the reader as he would to a guest invited into his home, he also credits her for finding solutions to some of the most intricate problems he faced when working on Sánchez's novel:

> The very first problem was the title and as Wico, my wife Clementine, and I pondered it she came up with the word *Beat*; it fit the text as a rhythmic expression and also added a sense of following the rounds of policeman or watchman, thus showing how the guaracha travels pervasively about the city of San Juan.[131]

However, Clementine Rabassa is not portrayed simply as a spouse. The translator's exchanges with his wife seem to have given birth to a fruitful reflection on the translation process itself, and to have sparked a debate on the place of *Macho Camacho's Beat* within the wider realm of Latin American literature and its reconfiguration of the novel as a genre within the region:

> My wife also noted that this novel is one more indication of the thesis she maintains in her book on the Ecuadorean novelist and playwright Demetrio Aguilera-Malta that the epic is alive and well and survives in the contemporary Latin American novel.[132]

The translator's wife is acknowledged as a specialist of Latin American literature and the dialogue she engages with Rabassa allows him to reflect on the collaborative approach they adopted for the translation of Sánchez's novel – although Gregory Rabassa is the sole signatory of the translation –, as well as situating the novel within the broader context of the Latin American Boom, thus creating his own pan-Caribbean/pan-American genealogy of the text.[133] In contrast, *La Rengaine qui déchaîne Germaine*, the French translation of Sánchez's *Macho Camacho*, offers very little insight into the translation

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[131] Gregory Rabassa, 'Introduction', Luis Rafael Sánchez, *Macho Camacho's Beat*, trans. by G. Rabassa (Normal, IL.: Dalkey Archive Press, 2001), p. iv.

[132] *Ibid*., p. iv.

[133] 'The novels of the Latin American Boom have many traits in common. One of these is the presence of many-faceted characters with often exchangeable identities, like Cortázar's *Doppelgangers*, or Vargas Llosa's people in *The Green House*, who change Identity as they change roles.' Gregory Rabassa, *Ibid*., pp. vii–viii.

process, despite footnotes added to the text to clarify cultural, linguistic and contextual references. The name of the translator appears on the title page as well as on its back cover ('roman traduit de l'espagnol par Dorita Nouhaud' can be read in small print underneath the name of the author and the title of his novel in French), but little information can be inferred about (let alone from) Dorita Nouhaud herself from the liminal spaces of the book.[134] In fact, it is worth noting that the publisher, Gallimard, whether when considering its imprint devoted to Latin American literature, 'Nouvelle Croix du Sud' since 1991, as is the case here for *La Rengaine qui déchaîne Germaine*, or its prestigious 'Collection Blanche', remains (in)famous for anonymising the translator, whose name is usually nowhere to be found on the front of book covers.[135] But it seems that such strategies are quite common among (mainstream) Western publishers, as Peter Bush deplores a similar tendency among British publishers:

> The present invisibility of literary translation in the UK stems from a tradition that belittles translation and is as much the responsibility of literary editors as it is the consequence of individual translator's professional strategies, be they foreignising or domesticating.[136]

Such observations tend, therefore, to lend even more credit to those translators whose voice can be heard in the spaces that surround and, to a certain extent, frame the texts they carry across. The English translation of Patrick Chamoiseau's *Chronique des sept misères* opted to retain the preface that Edouard Glissant had written for the French publication of the novel, integrating this 'original' paratext with Linda Coverdale's translation, thereby (re)mapping the author's work within a Francophone literary tradition

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[134] The same could be said about the 'epitext' surrounding her translation, as a book review by Olivier Barrot broadcast on French national TV (FR3) shortly after the French translation came out, further illustrates: 'Ce roman, génialement traduit, est une curiosité. Son auteur, Luiz Rafael Sánchez, est né en 1936. Il enseigne à l'université de Porto Rico, cet état des Caraïbes associé aux Etats-Unis et qui est à la fois antillais, hispanique, et américain.' Nothing is said of the translator who remains completely invisible in the presentation of the book. <http://www.ina.fr/video/CPC92000499> [accessed 22 February 2017]

[135] See Ananda Devi's case, further discussed in chapter 6.1 and Julia Waters's article on 'Ananda Devi as Transcolonial Translator', *Intimate Enemies: Translation in Francophone Texts*, K. Batchelor and C. Bisdorff eds. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), pp. 216–234.

[136] Peter Bush, 'The Translator as Arbiter', *The Translator's Dialogue: Giovanni Pontiero*, ed. by Pilar Orero and Juan C. Sager (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: Benjamins Translation Publishing, 1997), pp. 115–126 (p. 126).

that nonetheless also calls for a communal, interlinguistic understanding of the region.[137] However, Linda Coverdale also benefits from an afterword in which she stresses the orality of Chamoiseau's writing – she mentions 'the reenergizing contact between orality and literature that can assure the authenticity of Creole writing'[138] –, but at the same time revealing some of her translation strategies to the reader:

> The Creole words for various plants, fruits, vegetables, animals, and so on that pop up throughout the original French text are to a great extent retained in this translation and are either explained by the author himself, easily understood in their context, clarified by me with a descriptive word or two, twinned with their English meanings when they first appear (*manicou*-possum, for example), or explained in the notes I have provided. Some Creole words, particularly those for a host of native plants with medicinal properties, have simply been translated into English. With the author's permission, I moved the material in his original footnotes either into the text itself (when it fit in gracefully) or to the notes (where it is marked with an asterisk).[139]

This extract brings to the fore several strategies that the translator has opted for, some of which could be described as (relative?) attempts to 'woman-handle' the text. Coverdale's decision to replace the original, authorial footnotes by comments re-inserted within the text proper or by endnotes of her choice may in fact be read as such, although the translator immediately backs her action by noting that her decisions were made 'with the author's permission', in other words were legitimized by the authorial, authoritative figure. Coverdale's relative agency can be contrasted with more assertive feminist translation strategies, whereby the translator fully assumes her rights as an autonomous creator. Susan Bassnett's translation of Alejandra Pizarnik's *Exchanging Lives* comes to

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[137] 'Fulfilling its splendid promise, the Francophone literature of the Antilles is coming into its own. Pouring forth at an ever-increasing pace, this literature lays claim to the diversity of our cultural heritage, our quest for a historical past that even yesterday was denied us, a perilous advance into the comforts and pitfalls of the modern world, and the adventure of a new form of expression arising from the confluence of several languages. […] 'And so, collectively, we can express our Caribbean reality.' Édouard Glissant, 'A Word Scratcher', in Patrick Chamoiseau, *Chronicle of the Seven Sorrows*, trans. by Linda Coverdale (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), p. vii and ix respectively.

[138] Linda Coverdale, 'Afterword' in Patrick Chamoiseau, *Chronicle of the Seven Sorrows*, trans. by Linda Coverdale (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), p. 213.

[139] *Ibid*., p. 215–216.

mind here as an example of a translator who decides to co-sign a collection of poems published in a bilingual volume of the Argentine writer, in which her name (or at least her *persona*) and her own poems appear right alongside the author's.[140] The limited scope of action granted to Coverdale can however find some explanation in the fact that she was able to consult the author when translating his work, an option Susan Bassnett could not afford as Pizarnik had died in 1972. Coverdale's own acknowledgment of her intention to remain faithful both to the writer's agenda and to the reader's accessibility to the text might also explain her changes to Chamoiseau's text. As she herself sums up, 'I have tried to respect the author's desire not to see what he calls "shadow areas" whited out by the rude glare of translation – while not leaving the reader floundering in the dark, either.'[141] In a similar vein, Rose-Myriam Réjouis and Val Vinokur's joint translation of *Solibo Magnificent* does not follow Chamoiseau's original slavishly, quite the opposite. In her afterword to the text aptly titled 'Sublime Tumble', Réjouis confers a palimpsestic dimension to the process of translation:

> Though Chamoiseau creates his language, he does not invent words from scratch. For his insistence on being called a word scratcher speaks of his desire to create a palimpsest, to write upon other texts. In this novel, he writes upon Solibo's text, among others. Likewise, this translation writes upon Chamoiseau's text, while using many others, and is thus too a palimpsest.[142]

The rite that the translator performs on the outskirts of the text is akin to an acrobatic feat whereby Réjouis explores the intricate crosscultural relationships at play in Chamoiseau's novel between characters representing the French metropolitan bureaucratic system, with its highly formal, impersonal language and Martinican local mores and customs expressed in colourful, almost intimate images. As the translator shows, Chamoiseau's text is already, in itself, a translation of sorts which she and Vinokur had to juggle with:

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[140] See Alejandra Pizarnik, *Exchanging Lives: Poems and Translations*, trans. by Susan Bassnett (Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2002).

[141] Linda Coverdale, 'Afterword' in Patrick Chamoiseau, *Chronicle of the Seven Sorrows*, trans. by Linda Coverdale (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), p. 216.

[142] Rose-Myriam Réjouis, 'Afterword: Sublime Tumble', in Patrick Chamoiseau, *Solibo Magnificent*, trans. by Rose-Myriam Réjouis and Val Vinokur (New York: Vintage International, 1997), p. 184.

> In his portrayal of the coexistence of French and Creole in Martinican reality, Chamoiseau also presents the reader with different levels of translation. The example below illustrates not a translation between two languages but really a translation of discourse, of ways of talking:
>
> Mr. Longue Bête-Longue, what is your age, profession and permanent address?
> — Huh?
> — The Inspector asks you what hurricane you were born after, what you do for the béké, and what side of town you sleep at night? Bouafesse specifies.
>
> Here, Bouafesse translates a question the Chief Inspector asks on the witnesses, but the translation occurs not from French into Creole – both Bouafesse and Pilon are speaking French – but from one culture, one class to another.[143]

This extract explicitly sites translation as part of the creation process in Chamoiseau's novel, thus further stressing the blurry contours that exist between original and translation, particularly when dealing with Caribbean literature where the problematic of language remains enmeshed in identity issues and exploited as political positioning, characteristics shared by and large across the region. The paratextual material appended to *Solibo Magnificent*, including the afterword aforementioned and a glossary and acknowledgments signed by both translators, further contributes to an interpretation of those thresholds as stages of translational performance, where the word is no longer simply carried across for the reader, but becomes transform*ative*.[144] It is interesting to note that the last section of the novel in English, which is devoted to the translators, with the afterword, their joint 'Glosses on names and nicknames', glossary and acknowledgments appears under the section of "Bringing the Word", after Chamoiseau's

[143] *Ibid*., p. 180.

[144] In her editorial to the eleventh volume of *Tessera*, Barbara Godard brings together performance and transformation to coin the notion of 'transformance' and argues the following: 'Instead of representations, performance stages social roles as models for demonstration and critique of social technologies (Monk 122). […] Performance destabilizes the fixed subjectivity of scripted text through setting in play the "fictive body" manipulated by the actor rehearsing her own staging of the imaginary as a subject in process. What these approaches share, is a theory of enunciation that considers a textual event as process, rather than finished product, within the constitution of social subjects.' Barbara Godard, 'Performance/Transformance', *Tessera,* 11 (1991), 11–18 (p. 13).

own dividing of the text into "Before the Word" and "After the Word". Not only does this strategy expand and transform the author's words through the voice of the translators, it also encourages us to think of the series of postscripts present in the book as a succession of stages from where the translators can perform their ritual offering. The giving gesture of 'bringing the word' to the reader therefore posits the mission of the translators as guided by a target-oriented approach, whilst it could be argued that through this performance, Réjouis and Vinokur similarly contribute to presenting their work not simply as an end result (a translated text), but as a process as well. The (post)liminal[145] material can be said to partake in the afterlife of Chamoiseau's first layer of the text and, in so doing, stages as well as documents the translation process as a complex social production that includes absent, yet 'expected' reactions on the part of the addressee (the reader), and helps bring to the fore the hurdles that can obstruct literary translation or publication. To a certain extent, then, 'bringing the word' becomes synonymous with the act of giving birth, or 'bringing into the world'. In her introduction to Marie Vieux-Chauvet's *Love, Anger, Madness*, Edwidge Danticat alludes to the hardships that the Haitian author had to face during her lifetime for her work to come out in print and ultimately live on.[146] She also refers the reader to the translators' preface, interestingly enough once again only signed by Rose-Myriam Réjouis,[147] and insists on the intricate process that the book went through during its distribution phase: 'we are fortunate to have the work that she had already completed and to have seen her books slowly return to print, first in France, where the publication of this book was abruptly stalled in 1968, then in Haiti, and finally here in the United States where she died.'[148] Adopting a similar stance, Linda Coverdale uses her 'Note on the Translation' at the end of *Massacre River* to

[145] 'Post' refers both to the spatial position of the paratext, located at the end of the book, here, as well as to Van Gennep's third stage of *Rites of Passage*, which implies transformation and the creation of a new entity. The brackets indicate that the spaces under study here can also be treated as liminal matter, that is as sites of transition, precisely because they site intersection and transformance.

[146] 'Through the valiant effort of an admirer, the writer's work manages to live on, something which Marie Vieux-Chauvet must have dreamed for herself while writing about Haiti, in French, in the United States, not certain if either she or her books would ever find their way back to Haiti or would ever find an interested audience in the United States.' Edwidge Danticat, 'Introduction', in Marie Vieux-Chauvet, *Love, Anger, Madness*, trans. by R.-M. Réjouis and V. Vinokur (New York, Modern Library, 2009), p. xii.

[147] Rose-Myriam Réjouis, 'Sharp Minds, Raw Hearts: A Translators' Preface', in *Ibid*., p. xxi.

[148] Danticat, 'Introduction', in Marie Vieux-Chauvet, *Love, Anger, Madness*, p. xiii.

present the translation process as a ritual of revival that she initiated after a chance encounter with the 'godparents' of the novel (see below) and thanks to which a second life was granted to Philoctète's text:

> To my dismay, I discovered that he had recently died, that there were no English translations of his works (which were out of print in French), and that no one even knew who held the rights to *Le Peuple des Terres Mêlées*, because the small Haitian firm that had published it was defunct. After New Directions took an interest in the novel, Alain Philoctète was eventually contacted, and he gave permission for his father's novel to return to life in this English translation, which I would like to dedicate to Obed and Cuschine Laviolette. They are the godparents of what has truly been a labor of love.[149]

The illocutionary force of this extract, in which the translator takes centre stage and assumes her task as translator/rescuer of the author's novel, also highlights the hardships undergone during the publication and diffusion phases of Philoctète's novel in both its French and English versions. It also brings to light some of the restrictions and challenges that Caribbean literature faces when it is originally or solely published locally.[150] When aimed at global audiences, Caribbean literature can benefit from wider circulation and better accessibility, especially when visibility is granted to a sanctioned specialist or translator, as the paratextual material studied in this section has shown. From those spaces, Caribbean literature can both be endorsed and (re)located away from logocentric, conventional discourses, whilst the translator can at one and the same time find expression through which traditional modes of understanding translation, which continue to be a main feature of mainstream publishing, can be transformed and disrupted.[151] Ultimately, prefaces, afterwords and the like form a complex web of rituals

[149] Linda Coverdale, 'Note on the Translation', René Philoctète, *Massacre River*, trans. by L. Coverdale (New York: New Directions, 2005), p. 218.

[150] The Spanish translation of Philoctète's novel complete erases any trace of those hardships, as it provides little to no information on the circuits of publication and diffusion of the book, let alone on the translation process. See René Philoctète, *El Río Masacre*, trans. by Mireia Porta (Madrid, Barataria ediciones: 2012).

[151] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Peter Bush have argued that different translation strategies are observed depending on the type of book published, highlighting that fiction is usually more resistant to the presence of translational paratext. Peter Bush has also insisted on the divide 'between theorists calling for translational strategies of cultural resistance and a press [Bush takes the example of The Serpent's Tail] that wants to subvert while avoiding prefaces and footnotes for fiction'. Peter Bush, 'The Translator as Arbiter', *The Translator's*

performed in the margins of the text, in the hope of engaging in a conversation with the reader, no matter how (forever) delayed that exchange may be, as the act of reading mostly remains a solitary, intimate activity. However, the thresholds studied in this section have contributed to opening a space of communality where Caribbean filiations can be re-mapped, if not restored, and where translation can similarly be granted higher visibility whilst being presented as a transformative process that encourages new readings.

The next section will try to go further in the analysis of the disruptive, subversive potential of paratextual thresholds when they are used by the author himself as he decides to assume the task and challenge of translation, presenting nonetheless that very act as incommensurate with the Caribbean (creole) experience he is trying to convey to the reader. David Dabydeen's first collection of poems, *Slave Song*, will serve as the main case study here to present translational thresholds as opaque sites of revelation that subvert traditional paratextual strategies primarily aiming at clarification and disambiguation.

2.2. Thresholds of opaque revelations

Slave Song was initially published in 1984 by the small publisher Dangaroo Press and re-published twenty-one years later by Peepal Tree Press. Both editions contain an introduction by the author, followed by his poems in Guyanese creole, for which (end) notes and translations are also provided by Dabydeen in the second half of the volume. It should also be noted that both editions contain illustrations, mostly reproductions of engravings that represent allegories evocative of slavery or episodes depicting different stages in the lives of slaves, male and female alike. The main difference between the two volumes resides, however, in the additional postscript written by the author for the Peepal Tree Press re-edition, in which Dabydeen casts a critical and somehow cynical glance at the series of poems he had written as an undergraduate:

> Twenty-one years on, I encounter the poems, shocked by the nakedness and obscenity of expression. […] *Slave Song* was a

Dialogue: Giovanni Pontiero, ed. by Pilar Orero and Juan C. Sager (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: Benjamins Translation Publishing, 1997), pp. 115–126 (p. 116).

> dark anti-Romance. Today, I distance myself from what Wilson Harris called 'the pornography of Empire.' 'This thing of darkness I don't acknowledge mine.[152]

The (post)liminal authorial space serves as a platform where Dabydeen can both distance himself from some aspects of the poems written earlier on, but also reinforce the task he had originally assumed as translator and critic, alongside that of writer. In fact, in his postscript to *Slave Song*, Dabydeen re-stresses, in hindsight but with great gusto, his subversive, somewhat pernicious use of paratext to elicit critical response to his poems from the reader:

> What I'm happier to take credit for is the apparatus of the Introduction, notes and translations, which appear to be peculiar midwives to the poems, seeking to strangle them at birth. […] The influence of the eighteenth century is apparent, whether didactic poetry like Grainger's Sugar Cane with its masses of notes and explanations, or editions of the Classics in which thirty pages of notes by editors showing off their erudition, holding up farthing candles to sunlight (Pope's *Dunciad* parodies the practice). […]
> Finally, the apparatus of notes and translations was an attempt to be poet, editor and translator, to resist the commerce of consuming 'third-world' produce. But I was young and idealistic and silly then. After twenty-one years of meagre royalties, I'm ripe for exploitation, so please buy this book.[153]

As posited earlier with feminist translational strategies, the thresholds of the text are purposefully sited as spaces that aim to create disruption in the reception of the poems here, inasmuch as the author admits having tried to fight against passive consumption of his work on the part of the (mostly non Guyanese) reader. A similar approach has been advocated in the framing of Caribbean literature circulating in translation thus far in this thesis to articulate the conditions of a (global) readability of Caribbean literature that nonetheless retains a sense of authenticity, which implies visibility, credibility and validity as much as resistance to ready-made, one-size-fits-all transparency and unproblematized or smoothed over transference.

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[152] David Dabydeen, *Slave Song* (Leeds: Peepal Tree press, 2005), p. 67.
[153] *Ibid*.

2.2.1. Caribbean authenticity or the 'unsheathing of the tongue'

> If one has learnt and used Queen's English for some years, the return to Creole is painful, almost nauseous for the language is uncomfortably raw, as I said, like a wound. One has to shed one's protective sheath of abstracts and let the tongue move freely in blood again. One has to get accustomed to the unsheathing of the tongue and the contact with raw matter.[154]

In the second episode of the BBC Radio 4 series 'Writing a New Caribbean' devoted to Jamaican writers, Elisha Efua Bartels interviews four contemporary diasporic authors on the relationship they entertain with their country and with writing 'in Jamaican', while living outside the Caribbean. Tanya Shirley admits giving in at times to a sense of nostalgia, but also 'forget[ting] [sometimes] the little idiosyncrasies' of Jamaican English.[155]Marlon James explains how the main character from his second novel *The Book of Night Women*, Lilith, came to be his 'patois cameo', a character that he decided to keep in his narrative, despite the fact that lending too much credence to patois 'would not have [lent] any authority' to the book, which is why he then had to subdue his use of vernacular in the text.[156] If James's Man Booker Prize winning novel *The Book of the Seven Killings* also retains whole chapters written in patois and no glossary whatsoever to guide non-Jamaican readers, does the (relative) impenetrability of the text put off a global audience, not necessarily familiar with Caribbean realities, let alone with Jamaican cultural references and language? The French translation of the novel seems to suggest that James's novel requires translational paratext to provide the projected, non-Anglophone reader with the tools that an English native speaker may have to decode more easily the novel and its sets of linguistic, as well as cultural references.[157]

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[154] *Ibid*., p. 13.

[155] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08g4lkx#play> broadcast on 27 February 2017 [05'44-05'46] [accessed 28 February 2017]

[156] *Ibid*., [13'45-13'46] [accessed 28 February 2017]

[157] *Brève histoire de sept meurtres*, trans. by Valérie Malfoy, includes notes as well as a glossary written by the translator. Jamaican terms and expressions are explained for a Francophone readership that may not instinctively connect English terms with Jamaican patois. In one of her glossary entries, the translator notes, for example: 'Chevaucher le *riddim*: poser sa voix sur le son. Le terme *riddim* (déformation de l'anglais « rhythm ») désigne la construction rythmique de base d'un morceau musical'. The use of italics on the

The German translation also provides a glossary to the text,[158] whilst the Spanish version of *Breve historia de siete asesinatos* offers a liminary note to the text that wishes to relocate the original's polyphony and justify, at one and the same time, its own choices in carrying across the multiple variants heard in James's English version:

> ¿Cómo puede reflejarse esa variedad en una traducción? Si cada jerga «vulgar» está indeleblemente marcada por su tiempo y su espacio, ¿cómo podemos trasladarla a las volubles geografías de otro idioma? Todas las soluciones a ese viejo (e intratable) problema son, en cierto modo, artificiosas. […]
> ¿Qué hacer entonces? Entre los muchos lenguajes del castellano (todos felizmente locales) hemos escogido la versión cubana de la elocuencia caribeña. No, como es obvio, por afinidad lingüística o parentesco gramatical, sino por proximidad física y, sobre todo, psicológica. Casi por analogía. «Jamaica y Cuba son uña y carne», leemos, muy oportunamente, en la página 209 de este libro. Fijado el objetivo, la novelista Wendy Guerra acometió la tarea de cubanizar los pasajes pertinentes en la meticulosa traducción del no menos novelista Javier Calvo. Ustedes juzgarán el producto, pero no es imposible que hayamos acertado.[159]

The translator's note exposes both the crudeness of the original patois, its 'vulgarity', much as Dabydeen does in the epigraph opening this section and his

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'deformed' English '*riddim'* flags the term as being non-standard English, as if suggesting a hierarchy between languages. Similarly, the pseudo phonetical transcription of 'posse' in another entry of the glossary, 'Posse (prononcer « possi »): gang', poses a supposed universal (yet Frenchified) pronunciation of the term that does not refer to a valid international phonetic system and, by the same token, does not acknowledge the multiple, existing variants and origins of the term. To a certain extent, this glossary entry further negates the tonality of the term by assimilating it to a model of pronunciation that a French reader would immediately understand, whilst paradoxically attempting to invoke the oral dimension of 'posse'. Marlon James, *Brève histoire de sept meurtres*, trans. by Valérie Malfoy (Paris: Albin Michel, 2016), p. 849 and p. 851 respectively.

[158] At the time of drafting this chapter, the German translation was not available for consultation. However, the epitext surrounding the novel, taking the form of an article here, mentions the insertion of a glossary in the forthcoming Heyne Harcore edition: 'Kristof Kurz, der Redakteur des Gesamtmanuskripts, hatte in den neun Monaten, die das Übersetzungsprojekt in Anspruch nahm, Herkulisches zu leisten: Er musste die Kapitelversionen speichern und immer wieder per E-Mail an das Übersetzerteam schicken, damit Revisionen eingearbeitet wurden und ein Glossar angelegt werden konnte.' <https://www.boersenblatt.net/artikel-ein__bersetzerteam_fuer_marlon_james__gangsterepos.1282058.html> [accessed 2 March 2017]

[159] 'Nota sobre la traducción', in Marlon James's *Breve historia de siete asesinatos*, trans. by Javier Calvo, with the help of Wendy Guerra (Barcelona: Malpaso ediciones, 2016), pp. 5–6.

introduction to *Slave Song*,[160] but also lays bare the untranslatability or, rather, the impossible transferability or transplantation of any patois ('jerga'), hence the necessarily artificial nature of any translation wishing to tackle such a task. Similarly, Dabydeen insists on the inappropriateness of his enterprise of translating his songs written in Guyanese creole into Standard English, as the former is primarily an oral form of expression, when the latter remains an essentially 'abstract' language.[161] How, then, can the authenticity of the original – not necessarily understood as a faithful or factual imitation of a given reality, but rather as the genuine concern for voicing and (re)creating idiosyncrasies and expressions of rawness of a given Caribbean soundscape, what Dabydeen calls the 'unsheathing of the tongue' – find validity in another language that attempts to transpose, precisely, a creole experience that seems incommensurate with the written word? Furthermore, how can one local variant substitute another without erasing what constitutes the latter's uniqueness, in other words without domesticating it? The translator's note to the Spanish version of *A Brief History of Seven Killings* offers an interesting reflection on those questions, as it advocates 'cubanisation' as a legitimate option, insofar as the original itself already drew attention to the ties binding Jamaica and Cuba, thus choosing to potentially sound foreign or at least less familiar to an Iberian reader. In so doing, the threshold of the text reveals the dilemma faced by many translators confronted with the task of carrying across a vernacular, whilst very often targeting global audiences; the translator's note elucidates the problems faced, whilst acknowledging the impenetrability, and therefore the futility, if not the damaging outcome, of translations that would seek a systematically transparent, assimilating transfer of the original. To come back to the question of authenticity, Sarah Lawson Welsh provides an insightful analysis of Dabydeen's use of Guyanese creole in *Slave Song* in relation to its (potentially questioned) verisimilitude:

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[160] In his introduction, Dabydeen writes: 'Canecutting is a savage ceremony, cutlass slashing away relentlessly at bamboo-hard body of cane; planting is equally vicious, a repeated stabbing into the soil. […] Male and female are involved in one continuous and conflicting ritual of cutting and planting. Needless to say the conflict continues after work, at home.' This brings us finally to the 'vulgarity' of the language. It is the vulgarity of the people, the vulgarity of their way of life.' Dabydeen, *Slave Song*, p. 12.

[161] Rosario Ferré makes a similar comparison between Spanish and English when writing about her self-translations. See chapter 5.

> It is important that we do not assume Dabydeen's adaptation of Guyanese creole to be a naturalistic, or even necessarily a representative one. The literary reconstruction of this medium of vocalization is necessarily a contrivance, an artifice, a self-conscious process. Even writers such as Selvon, whose fictitional use of creole was considered naturalistic by many of his earliest (British) critics, has openly acknowledged the need to "modify the dialect"; the creative use of the raw materials of Caribbean speech involves, for him at least, a carefully constructed adaptation, even simulation of the language as *heard*.[162]

By connecting Dabydeen's practice to that of Selvon's use of Trinidadian English, Welsh reminds us that the insertion of any creole language in a literary text remains first and foremost a (re)creation on the part of the writer, who therefore mobilises and remaps to his own liking and sense of artistic agency what a particular Caribbean soundscape feels like to him. What can also be argued is that the critical, yet highly parodic apparatus that Dabydeen adds to his creole songs functions not simply as a prosthetics to the poems,[163] a derivative version of the original, but rather as fully-fledged, equally legitimate extensions of them that are also reminiscent of modernist and post-modernist writing techniques. In fact, his multiple references to the untranslatability of creole particularisms offer important metatextual reflections on translation as a process and not simply as an end result, all the more so as Dabydeen's comments and notes come before the actual translated forms that were retained. As the following example shows, the (pre)liminal paratext clearly indicates a break between creole and written, Standard English, whilst exposing the latter's limitations when it comes to rendering Guyanese experiences:

> The English fails where the Creole succeeds, particularly in the impossible translation of 'dodo' as 'sleep' for the word 'dodo' means more than sleep and is inseparable from a specific action – the comforting of a child when it is crying by kissing it or patting it until it is quietened and at rest. […] I have also retained the full vulgarity of the language for it is a profound element in Guyanese life: for instance, in *The Canecutters' Song*, I wanted to show the Creole mind straining and

[162] Sarah Lawson Welsh, 'Experiments in Brokenness: The Creative Use of Creole in David Dabydeen's *Slave Song*', *The Art of David Dabydeen*, ed. by Kevin Grant (Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 1997), pp. 27–46 (p. 34).
[163] Genette, *Seuils*, p. 16.

> struggling after concepts of beauty and purity (imaged in the White Woman), but held back by its crude, physical vocabulary.[164]

In one of his songs, 'For Mala', Dabydeen also provides the reader with cultural explanations pertaining to Indo-Caribbean references. The author focuses on the Hindu term 'juta' which he clarifies and yet also presents as an opaque expression highly resistant to translation due to its polysemic content:

> To 'juta' is a Hindu word meaning to spoil food by eating it firstly before its proper time, and secondly with dirty hand or tongue. No English translation is really possible. In the song it refers to the rape of the young girl, Mala, taken before her time, i.e. before her womanhood and thus despoiled; also the bodily filth of the rapists.[165]

One wonders in fact whether a Guyanese reader not necessarily familiar with Indo-Caribbean rites would be able to infer all the latent meaning revealed by Dabydeen in his preliminary note to the translation. In the translated text, 'juta' completely disappears and is rendered as 'Somebody has *spoilt* God's holy fruit and man will taste her sweetness no more'.[166] Without the presence of the note, the initial creole reference would have simply been assimilated into the mainstream term 'spoilt'. To a certain degree, it could be argued as well that the authorial paratext here reveals expressions that can remain equally opaque for a Guyanese reader, as suggested by the author himself elsewhere.[167] The 'unsheathing of the tongue' would therefore not necessarily involve crossings beyond the Caribbean sea, implicating global transfers of Caribbean literature, as was shown with the various recent translations of Marlon James's *A Brief History of Seven Killings*; rather, experiencing Caribbean oral legacies demands in its own right an endless adjustment to the surrounding auditory and sensory environments. In other words,

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[164] Dabydeen, *Slave Song*, p. 14.

[165] Dabydeen, *Slave Song*, p. 40.

[166] *Ibid*., p. 42, emphasis mine.

[167] 'More importantly, I do not think that our own people, because we have to be West Indians, understand our own language, or indeed the nuances or evocations of our language. Just because you can speak a language doesn't mean you can inhabit it creatively and intellectually. I think West Indians will benefit from the notes, if they benefit at all, or they will benefit as much as the English.' Frank Birbalsingh, 'Interview with David Dabydeen, 1989', *The Art of David Dabydeen*, ed. by Kevin Grant (Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 1997), pp. 177–198 (p. 184).

it calls for a constant remapping as well as new cartographies to help re-occupy spaces that have been assumed as borrowed from past colonial legacies.[168] Spaces where the interplay between the spoken and the written can be brought to the fore, as in *Slave Song*, and more importantly spaces that rework the relations between margin and centre to offer valid ways of 'provincializing'[169] Caribbean literature that circulates globally, while, at the same time, authenticating it, and, ultimately revealing and reinstating its opacity.

2.2.2. New rites/rights of passage for Caribbean untranslatabilities

In 'Tales of Survival', the introduction to his *Creole Folktales*, translated (once again) by Linda Coverdale, Patrick Chamoiseau subscribes to Glissant's notion of *détour*[170] which he presents as follows in relation to the Caribbean, Creole storyteller:

> The Creole Storyteller is a fine example of this paradoxical situation [which Glissant calls *détour*]: the master knows of his tales and allows him to tell them, and sometimes even listens to them himself, so the Storyteller must take care to use language that is opaque, devious – its significance broken up into a thousand sibylline fragments. His narrative turns around long digressions that are humorous, erotic, often even esoteric. His dialogue with his audience is unceasing, punctuated with onomatopoeias and sound effects intended not only to hold his listeners' attention but also to help camouflage any dangerously subversive content. And here again Edouard Glissant is right to emphasize that the Storyteller's object is almost *to obscure as he reveals*. To form and inform through the hypnotic power of the voice, the mystery of the spoken word.[171]

According to Chamoiseau, the strategies deployed in acts manifesting *détour* are meant to reveal as much as they are intended to obfuscate. The last section of this chapter

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[168] Dabydeen's recourse to paratext has for instance been criticized for its Eurocentric, ethnographic bent. See Mark McWatt, 'Review of *Coolie Odyssey*', *Journal of West Indian Literature* (September 1989), 86–90.

[169] The term is synonymous with decentring here and is borrowed from Dipesh Chakrabarty in *Provincializing Europe: postcolonial thought and historical difference* (Princeton, NJ; Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[170] See Édouard Glissant, *Le discours antillais* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1981), pp. 28-36.

[171] Patrick Chamoiseau, *Creole Folktales*, trans. by Linda Coverdale (New York: The New Press, 1994), p. xiii.

will attempt, in turn, to articulate Glissant's notion of *détour* with translational practices that aim at displacing and, indeed, opacifying the notion of transparency in translation when advocating the use of paratextual material, whilst simultaneously arguing for new rites/rights of passage for Caribbean untranslatabilities.

Chamoiseau's subversive use of footnotes in several of his novels, among which *Texaco*, *Solibo Magnifique* or *Chronique des sept misères* could be compared, to a certain extent, to Dabydeen's own self-described 'spoof gloss' encountered in *Slave Song*.[172] With the shared, express aim of disrupting unilateral interpretations as well as passive consumptions of Caribbean oral traditions, both authors use the thresholds of their texts to advocate a sense of authenticity that is deeply rooted in opacity and, therefore, hardly transferable into straightforward, undeviating equivalences. Before offering a possible (yet, presented as already defeated) translation of his poem 'For Ma', Dabydeen warns the reader of the abortive nature of his enterprise:

> The extraordinary richness of the Creole language defies adequate translation. A breathless, hectic line such as 'cutlass foh shaap wood foh chap fence foh build dat bull bruk dung' (line 11) becomes quite tame in standard English, the sinister assonance of 'cutlass', 'shaap', 'chap' and the battering alliteration of 'build bull bruk dung' (both devices re-enacting the meaning of the sentence) being lost in translation. […] This Creole choreography becomes lame in translation.[173]

Creole is presented as an untamed and untameable 'choreography' that resists any attempts at adequate, that is 'proper'[174] deciphering and that cannot fit in with the normative precepts of a written standard. Similarly, the narrator in *Solibo Magnificent* offers strategies of opacifying the French text by further creolizing it, whilst playfully disrupting the flow of the main narrative through the insertion of explicitly obtrusive

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[172] The expression is borrowed from Dabydeen, which he used during an interview with Frank Birbalsingh when referring to his use of paratext in *Slave Song*: 'I thought of three things in writing an extensive introduction and a series of notes: it was a literary joke – hence I referred twice in *Slave Song* to T S Eliot, because Eliot had also joked and provided a kind of spoof gloss to *The Waste Land*.' Frank Birbalsingh, 'Interview with David Dabydeen, 1991', *The Art of David Dabydeen*, ed. by Kevin Grant (Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 1997), pp. 177–198 (p. 182).

[173] Dabydeen, *Slave Song*, p. 59.

[174] See chapter 1 and footnote 92 on Dabydeen's use of the 'properization' of language.

footnotes that read like counterpoints to the Standard French (or here English) text. One such examples reads as follows:

The Chief Sergeant metamorphosed.[1]

[1] Or *mofwaza*, if that's any help. [175]

In this particular instance, the threshold of the text sites mock-translation as a potential viable expression of Caribbean *détour*, as Chamoiseau carries out an exercise in metafiction that is not unlike Dabydeen's own incursions in *Slave Song*, in which the author appears as a trickster figure that alternates roles and wears different masks according to the *persona* he wishes to embody.[176] Such strategies expose the necessary guile and ruse attached to Creole as a form of expression that had to develop against harsh rules imposed upon former slaves, so that they could communicate with each other. However, by revealing the art of camouflage in the very parts of the text that were deemed to be the privileged territory of (former) ethnographic and ethnocentric expression, that is in the margins of the text here appearing in the forms of foot- or end-notes, both authors dislodge former, traditional attempts to align Caribbean realities along Western standards, whilst staging the necessary reclaiming of those spaces. Conversely, although quite provocatively, Edward Kamau Brathwaite adopts a seemingly reverse attitude towards the notes he 'reluctantly' provides the reader with at the end of *X/Self*:

> The poetry of *X/Self* is based on a culture that is personal – i-man/Caribbean – and multifarious, with the leaning and education that this implies. Because Caribbean culture has been so cruelly neglected both by the Caribbean itself, and by the rest of the world (except for spot/check and catch-ups via cricket and reggae), my references (my nomos and icons) may appear mysterious, meaningless even, to both Caribbean and non-Caribbean readers. So the notes… which I hope are helpful, but which I provide with great reluctance, since the irony is that they may suggest the poetry is so obscure in itself that it has to be lighted up; is so lame, that it has to have a

[175] Chamoiseau, *Solibo Magnificent*, p. 51.

[176] 'Dabydeen inhabits all these modes in *Slave Song* and the Dabydeen of the notes and translations to *Slave Song* is merely assuming the last in a series of masks in the collection – there are no originary voices in *Slave Song*, only reconstructed, represented, mediating ones.' Sarah Lawson Welsh, 'Experiments in Brokenness: The Creative Use of Creole in David Dabydeen's *Slave Song*', p. 37.

> crutch; and (most hurtful of all) that it is bookish, academic, 'history'.[177]

In his introductory paragraph to the endnotes presenting terms and expressions found in his poems, Brathwaite stresses the fact that the references he uses are highly personal, arguing, moreover, that even Caribbean readers may not be familiar with them, much in the same vein as Dabydeen admitted. However, unlike his Martinican and Guyanese counterparts, Brathwaite presents opacity as a negative attribute, since it demands (or so it appears) the addition of paratextual material which he deems cumbersome and somehow counterproductive, as it frames his artistic license within the bounds of a rather scholarly approach to the poems. Yet, as will be argued, the author also plays with the references he chooses to 'semi-clarify'. If, as some of the terms and expressions inserted in his endnotes show, a number of entries attest to the undeniable purpose of explaining possible obscure elements for global and Caribbean audiences alike, particularly when it comes to political or cultural figures and historical events,[178] other entries further interrogate and destabilise the original lines of the poems, but beyond that, teleological readings of History. One particular ploy Brathwaite uses is the question mark, which invites a blurring, if not a complete dismissal of some historical truths. The two examples below illustrate this point:

> *the black magnificenti/dei medici*: the ?unbalanced montage world of the Mediterranean (Norse, Byzantine, Afro/European) produced Aesop, Alcmar, Socrates, Severus, Cleopat, Julia, Vercingetorix, Sycorax, Hannibal, Othello, Angelo Solimann Africanus and several of the Medicis […]
> *marti*: Jose Marti (1853-95), ideologist/activist of the Cuban War of Independence, 1895-?98.[179]

On the one hand, Brathwaite relies on the technique of montage to disrupt a purely chronological reading of ('?unbalanced') genealogies inherited from the Mediterranean,

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[177] Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *X/Self* (Oxford, Oxford University Press: 1987), p. 113.

[178] See cultural or religious references that are explained in a rather straightforward, conventional way, such as '*thor… gaar… baldur*: Norse gods', or again, '*corbusier*: Le Corbusier, Swiss-born 1920s architect and habitat philosopher, best known for his monastery at La Tourette, near Lyons, France; the modern community living space, L'Unité, at Marseilles and (in the 1950s) new cities at Chandigarh (Punjab) and other parts of India.' *Ibid*., p. 114.

[179] *Ibid*., pp. 118 and 120 respectively.

suggesting instead a new matrix for Caribbean legacies, that he develops in other works and that take the form of an audio-visual aesthetic,[180] while on the other, he invites the reader to reconsider Cuba's War of Independence beyond its official timeline (1895-?98). Those authorial notes present a complex understanding of authenticity – inasmuch as they carry the authoritative voice of Brathwaite himself – that nonetheless resists any clear-cut, precise and often imposed historical divisions. On the contrary, Brathwaite endows the traditionally highly codified endnotes, of which he once again stresses the artificiality and lack of relevance when it comes to his own poetry, with his own sense of artistic authenticity that entails a distancing from factual accuracy. In so doing, he too partakes in a translation of *détour* that he personalizes through his own sense of creolization of punctuation, typeface and language throughout *X/Self* and in his work as a whole. Yet, it must be added that when it comes to disrupting the norms that regulate paratextual usage, the translator himself (or herself) usually enjoys much less leeway than the authorial figure. In that sense, the very visibility and audibility of the translator in prefaces, afterwords, glossaries and (end)notes remains relative when compared to that of the author. As has been seen, when a Caribbean text is introduced by a prominent literary or scholarly figure, the translator is often relegated to a postliminal space, that is to an afterword or an endnote. Needless to say, though, that liminal spaces such as the ones encountered in the works of Dabydeen, Chamoiseau and, to a certain extent, Brathwaite not only stress the necessity of resisting transparent[181] readings of Caribbean literature; they also invite a similar disobedience to assimilating, invisible models of textual transfers on the part of the translator. As an agent of cultural mediation, the translator is in turn trusted with the twofold mission of re-locating the text for the receiving audience, by privileging its accessibility, hence its suitability,[182] whilst simultaneously dis-locating

[180] See his Sycorax Video Style, as applied, for example, in his latest collection of texts, *Strange Fruit* (Leeds, Peepal Tree Press, 2016).

[181] Venuti speaks of the 'illusion of transparency' in what is generally admitted as a 'faithful' translation. See Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 1.

[182] It is important to note, for instance, that some publishers might consider paratext to be more relevant than others, depending on the type of readers they target. Publishing strategies aiming at mainstream or even young readers tend to erase the presence of the translator, while smaller presses and publishers aiming at specialists or scholars will tend to accept more readily translational paratext. As Mary Louise Wardle observes in the case of Italian translations of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, '[some] translations are published to attract the attention of the more academic side of the market with introductions and prefaces by respected authors or

it in order to convey the original's refusal of transparency. The task at hand imposes a constant reappraisal of thresholds so that the translator of Caribbean literature can ultimately be at once visible and camouflaged, as much as (s)he can reveal and at the same time obfuscate. Only then can the thresholds of the texts truly operate as communal sites of resistance from where Caribbean literature can be performed anew as well as revisited. Peter Newmark's statement that 'a translated novel without a translator's preface ought to be a thing of the past, and therefore the preface as well as the work should draw the reviewer's attention'[183] is still highly relevant today, particularly where Caribbean fiction is concerned. Yet, it is far from accepted as common practice, although it advocates a reception of Caribbean literature that does not entail passive consumption on the part of reader. On the contrary, as has been argued throughout this chapter, the thresholds of the text can serve as sites of choric resistance to advocate new rites/rights of passage for Caribbean singularities and untranslatabilities when they are carried across other cultures, exposing possible and, at times, inevitable (mis)constructions and (mis)representations that such transfers entail.

scholars, as well as footnotes, endnotes, biographies, bibliographies, etc.' Mary Louise Wardle, 'Alice in Busi-Land: The Reciprocal Relation Between Text and Paratext', *Translation Peripheries: Paratextual Elements in Translation*, Anna Gil-Bardají, Pilar Orero and Sara Rovira-Esteva, eds. (Bern: Peter Lang, 2012), pp. 27–42 (p. 31).

[183] Peter Newmark, 'Introductory Survey', *The Translator's Handbook*, ed. by Catriona Picken (London: Aslib, 1983), p. 17, cited in Ellen McRae, 'The Role of Translators' Prefaces to Contemporary Literary Translations into English', *Translation Peripheries: Paratextual Elements in Translation*, ed. by Anna Gil-Bardají, Pilar Orero and Sara Rovira-Esteva (Bern: Peter Lang, 2012), pp. 63–82 (p. 63).

3. The trial of the border: from inhospitable thresholds to liminal reciprocities.

It has been argued that in his post-modern tale of pseudo science-fiction *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (henceforth *Oscar Wao*), Dominican-American author Junot Díaz uses the thresholds of the text, and more specifically its footnotes, among other strategic sites in the novel, as communal spaces of solidarity in which heteroglossia[184] plays a key part to strengthen the ties between narrator and narratee:

> Heteroglossia interacts with this narratological structure by reinforcing the solidarity between the narrator and the narratee: Spanglish, African-American English, nerd talk, as well as the footnotes suggest an in-group or several in-groups, which are defined through the exclusive knowledge of certain codes and forms of address. Heteroglossia thus not only constitutes the narrator's voice, but also the relation between the narrator and the narratee: the use of specific registers enhances the solidarity between these textually encoded positions.[185]

Yet, it could equally be contended that the creation of such solidarities or 'in-groups' inevitably brings about the exclusion of potentially non-initiated characters or readers. Moreover, when it comes to translation, heteroglossia is often considered a particularly problematic, if not altogether impenetrable textual feature, as it is rarely thought to be successfully transferable for the receiving audience, particularly when one of the (sub)languages used in the original coincides with the main target language.[186] However, in the context of the Caribbean, history has time and again shown that translation, and more particularly the refusal to acknowledge a right to non-translation, or mistranslation, could turn into violent acts of repression and, ultimately, death. By invoking the Parsley Massacre that took place in 1937 on the island of Hispaniola along the border area delineating Haiti and the Dominican Republic, this chapter will start by

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[184] The term is understood in the sense of Bakhtin's *raznorečie* here.

[185] See Michael Boyden and Patrick Goethals, 'Translating the Watcher's Voice: Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* into Spanish', *Meta: journal des traducteurs / Meta: Translators' Journal*, 56, 1 (2011), 20–41 (p. 30).

[186] 'As translation scholars have pointed out, the translation often not only homogenizes the original, but sometimes also inverts its values by familiarizing what was supposed to remain foreign (the embedded language or languages) and, vice versa, by defamiliarizing what was supposed to remain familiar (the surface language).' *Ibid*., p. 21.

acknowledging the historical links that exist between translation and violence in the region, as border residents of Hispaniola, mostly of Haitian descent, had then no other choice but to comply with the armed men who were summoning them to perform acts of 'flawless translation' if they wished to be spared death. This section will mainly focus on two diasporic accounts that go back to the 1937 massacre and cover it more or less extensively: Junot Díaz's *Oscar Wao* on the one hand, and Edwidge Danticat's *The Farming of Bones*, a fictitious testimonio, on the other. These texts have been chosen both for the temporal proximity they seemingly share with the events that they depict (Danticat's novel is set mostly during the 1930s and focuses on the years leading up to and immediately following the tragedy), as well as for the lapse of time that actually separates them from the genocide, as both novels were published less than twenty years ago. However, given the recent turn of events which both Díaz and Danticat have characterized as a human rights crisis in the Dominican Republic, whereby hundreds of thousands of Dominican citizens have been at risk of being stripped of their citizenship on the grounds of their supposed Haitianness or 'non Dominicanness', the Afro-phobic sentiments that culminated in the massacre back in 1937 continue to haunt the island of Hispaniola and its everyday life.[187] Both texts have also been chosen because they target global audiences, and as such, already function as translations, as both Danticat and Díaz chose to write in English, refusing, however, to adopt a monolinguist approach to literature, as they both convey a sense of heteroglossia in their novels, whilst deploying a

[187] Maria Cristina Fumagalli's monograph dedicated the border area of Hispaniola connects the events of 1937 with the current situation whereby *carnets* (identification papers) have been introduced in the Dominican Republic to regulate the entrance of Haitians: 'In 2012 it was established by Dominican authorities that Haitian occasional workers who live in the Haitian borderland should obtain a 'carnet' or 'identification card' valid for a year, which would give them permission to enter legally in the Dominican Republic. Two years later, however, these carnets have still not been issued and the migratory flux appears to be arbitrarily regulated, a system obviously open to abuse.' Maria Cristina Fumagalli, *On the Edge: Writing the Border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), p. 8. It should further be noted that Junot Díaz remains a controversial figure in his native country, due to his outspoken condemnation and activism against the recent measures undertaken by the Dominican Constitutional Court seeking to denationalize Haitians: see the controversies around the possible lifting of the order of merit the writer obtained back in 2009. See <http://hoy.com.do/selman-acusa-de-antidominicano-a-junot-diaz-y-le-retira-orden-al-merito/> [accessed 23 March 2017]. Similarly, Mario Vargas Llosa, who was appointed honorary president of the 2016 Feria del Libro in Santo Domingo, was severely criticized in the Dominican Republic for his opinion piece published in *El País* regarding the same ruling.
See <http://elpais.com/elpais/2013/10/31/opinion/1383233998_965346.html> [accessed 30 September 2016]

whole array of different strategies. This choice to anchor translation and its reverse, though complementary movement, 'assertive nontranslation'[188], will be analysed as coping mechanisms and strategies of displacement as well as of deferment for the authors to identify, but also try and break the patterns of violence associated with repressive acts of translation encountered time and time again in the history of the Americas. The study of *The Farming of Bones* and *Oscar Wao* will also pave the way to a discussion of the potentially problematic treatment of trauma narratives emerging from the Caribbean but aimed at global audiences: how can such texts be translated and adapted for a North American or European reader, not necessarily familiar with the events depicted, let alone personally affected by them, and yet create a sense of credibility and shared memory that avoids the traps of mass consumption and commodification? Can Hispaniola's traumatic memories of genocide be re-enacted or re-presented in a language that was not that of experience in the first place? What happens when those initial acts of translation are eventually replicated and the text is carried across into yet another, further removed, non-Caribbean language? Furthermore, how do the thresholds of the text, taking the form of autographic as well as allographic footnotes, but also that of more subtle (c)overt cushioning strategies,[189] help identify, re-articulate and at the same time (although perhaps not necessarily consistently) address those issues? To try and provide some answers to these questions, Danticat and Díaz's texts will be studied alongside other Caribbean literary accounts of the massacre primarily aimed at local audiences, such as Ana Lydia Vega's collection of short stories *Encancaranublado* or Mayra Montero's *Del rojo de su sombra*, as well as transregional, multilingual initiatives aiming at the

[188] The expression is borrowed from Evelyn Ch'ien and particularly applies to *Oscar Wao*: 'Díaz adopts a strategy of what literary critic Evelyn Ch'ien calls "assertive nontranslation" (2004: 209), which means that he refuses to explain or contextualize non-English elements, but rather integrates them into the discourse without the use of brackets or italics, thus deliberately offsetting the cadence of the English sentences. As a result, the reader gets the impression of being pulled into the bilingual dynamic of the immigrant community, without necessarily understanding everything that is going on between the interlocutors.' Michael Boyden and Patrick Goethals, 'Translating the Watcher's Voice: Junot *Díaz's The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* into Spanish', p. 22.

[189] The term 'cushioning' is borrowed from Chantal Zabus who takes it in turn from Peter Young and Howard Stone and explains it as a strategy used 'to tag an explanatory word or phrase' onto a word that would not necessarily be understood by mainstream readers. Chantal Zabus, *The African Palimpsest: Indigenization of language in the West African Europhone Novel* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1991), p. 158.

development and transmission of a pan-Caribbean memory. Finally, French and Spanish versions of *The Farming of Bones* and *Oscar Wao* will be taken into account in the course of this chapter to investigate the effects of (back) translations on the initial (yet, already displaced and delayed) rendering of pain and trauma.

3.1 Tongue-t(w)esters: the case of Hispaniola

3.1.1. Translation and Shibboleth

The massacre that took place in Hispaniola in 1937 has been given different names across space and time, among which the Parsley Massacre, El Corte, Kout Kouto or the Dominican Vespers, but remains by and large known as a Caribbean re-enactment of the biblical Shibboleth.[190] It is no coincidence, then, that Edwidge Danticat opens *The Farming of Bones* with a quote from *Judges 12:4-6*[191] that immediately inscribes her testimonial within a universal intertext of racial discrimination and death based on linguistic profiling, as Dominican dictator Rafael Leónidas Trujillo ordered the massacre of Haitian labourers (*braceros*) in the border area of Dajabón in the Dominican Republic, an event which saw the death of tens of thousands of Haitians and Dominicans alike (estimates vary)[192]. To distinguish Haitians from Dominicans, a litmus test was performed on the people attempting to flee across the border into Haiti: a sprig of parsley was held up to the fugitives' faces and when asked what it was, those who were able to pronounce

[190] The choice of one term over the other in reference to the 1937 genocide is far from anecdotal and the act of naming cultural or historical events, as well as places or whole islands, is particularly revelatory in the Caribbean, where successive and, at times, simultaneous waves and forms of conquest and resistance have been echoed in the language chosen to map out geographies as well as temporalities.

[191] 'Jephthah called together the men of Gilead and fought against Ephraim. The Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan leading to Ephraim, and whenever a survivor of Ephraim said, "Let me cross over," the men of Gilead asked him, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If he replied, "No,", they said, "All right, say 'Shibboleth.'" If he said, "Sibboleth," because he could not pronounce the word correctly, they seized and killed him at the fords of the Jordan. Forty-thousand were killed at the time.' Edwidge Danticat, *The Farming of Bones* (London: Abacus, 1998), page unnumbered.

[192] See Maria Cristina Fumagalli *On the Edge: Writing the Border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic* (pp. 140–141) and Daniel Graziadei 'Die Grenze am Massaker-Fluss: transmediale Textgräber in hispaniolischen Literaturen', *Mémoires transmédiales: Geschichte und Gedächtnis in der Karibik und ihrer Diaspora*, ed. by Natascha Ueckmann and Gisela Febel (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2017), pp. 243–260 (p. 247) for more information on that point.

correctly the Spanish word *perejil* (parsley) were assumed to be Dominicans, hence spared death. Parsley is used as a leitmotiv throughout *The Farming of Bones*: as the main character (Amabelle)'s narrative progresses, the reader is made aware of several possible explanations as to why the word *perejil*, out of all expressions at hand, was chosen as a means of weeding out the people presumed of Haitian descent from the border area of Dajabón. Those who were unable to pronounce the Spanish *Jota* [x] and *Erre* [ɾ] correctly were assumed to be Haitians and immediately killed, as Danticat depicts throughout her novel, and Díaz hints at in seemingly anecdotal fashion throughout the numerous footnotes he adds to *Oscar Wao.* However, Danticat's narrative principally differs from Díaz's in its omnipresent focus on parsley which she intrinsically ties to the 1937 massacre. Parsley is seen as a *pharmakon* in Danticat's novel, providing both a cure for an ailment – a key feature for the plot, as Amabelle's late parents were both healers and drowned in the river Massacre while attempting to cross the border to get pots and medicinal herbs – and functioning as the poison itself. The novel thus oscillates in its various attempts to pinpoint the exact origin of this choice of word, as is shown by the uncertain nature of the rumours about the association of parsley with death,[193] and later on this theme re-emerges when the narrator witnesses a friend's death, in which parsley is associated with 'cleansing', a term that implies all the ambiguity of the *pharmakon*:

> […] But parsley? Was it because it was so used, so commonplace, so abundantly at hand that everyone who desired a sprig could find one? We used parsley for our food, our teas, our baths, to cleanse our insides as well as our outsides. Perhaps the Generalissimo in some larger order was trying to do the same for his country.[194]

The French translation, however, lifts some of the ambiguity present in 'cleansing', opting for a term that suggests bodily hygiene and spiritual regeneration rather than large-scale murder: 'Nous utilisions le persil pour nous nourrir, pour nos

[193] 'Many had heard rumors of groups of Haitians being killed in the night because they could not manage to trill their "r" and utter a throaty "j" to ask for parsley, to say perejil.' Edwidge Danticat, *The Farming of Bones*, p. 114.
[194] *Ibid*., p. 203.

tisanes, nos bains, pour *nous laver* à l'extérieur autant qu'à l'intérieur'[195]. Regardless of this translational choice, the narrator's inability to find coherence behind the dictator's senseless actions, hinting at the same time at the possibility of some grander design of which she remains unaware but is highly sceptical, finds an echo, later on, with Amabelle's employer, Señora Valencia, and her own interpretation of the parsley test:

> Your people did not trill their *r* the way we do, or pronounce the jota. 'You can never hide as long as there is parsley nearby,' the Generalissimo is believed to have said. On this island you walk too far and people speak a different language. Their own words reveal who belongs to what side.[196]

This extract illustrates how linguistic difference served as an instrument of repression and death under Trujillo's regime, whilst in Díaz's text the massacre is re-contextualized within a series of repeated acts of violence that occurred throughout the Americas. In *Oscar Wao*, the Haitian genocide is thus (re)connected to the demise of indigenous peoples from the Caribbean and the Americas at large, as the author draws lines of genealogy between the eponymous character's fictitious ancestors and historical figures such as Hatüey or Crazy Horse, inviting the reader to interrogate the United States' own expansionism and involvement in acts of colonization:

> In La Vega, where the family had lived since 1791, they were practically royalty, as much a landmark as La Casa Amarilla and the Río Camú; neighbors spoke of the fourteen-room house that Abelard's father had built, Casa Hatüey,[23] […]
>
> 23. Hatüey, in case you've forgotten, was the Taino Ho Chi Minh. When the Spaniards were committing First Genocide in the Dominican Republic, Hatüey left the Island and canoed to Cuba, looking for reinforcements, his voyage a precursor to trip Máximo Gómez would take almost three hundred years later. Casa Hatüey was named Hatüey because in Times Past it supposedly had been owned by a descendant of the priest who tried to baptize Hatüey right before the Spaniards burned him at the stake. (What Hatüey said on that pyre is a legend in itself: Are there white people in Heaven? Then I'd rather go to Hell.) History, however, has not been kind to Hatüey. Unless something changes ASAP he will go out like his camarada Crazy Horse. Coffled to a beer, in a country not his own.[197]

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[195] Edwidge Danticat, *La récolte douce des larmes*, trans. by Jacques Chabert (Paris: Grasset et Fasquelle, 1999), p. 220 (emphasis mine).

[196] Danticat, *The Farming of Bones*, p. 304.

[197] Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (London: Faber and Faber, 2008), p. 212.

By footnoting the reference to Hatüey and Crazy Horse, Díaz calls the reader's attention to the margins of the text from where he interrogates the power dynamics at play not only on a diegetic level – the flow of 'History'/Oscar's life story being constantly interrupted by contrapuntal notes – , but also on a macro level, as past and on-going colonial practices are relentlessly decried in the novel.[198] In fact, the narrator's numerous incursions in the margins of the text, taking the shape of footnotes most ostensibly, but also of internal parenthetical comments and insertions, could be said to function as subversive disruptions that seek to perturb the flow of the main narrative, as if to suggest that a linear, uninterrupted mode of reading may well need to undergo a 'decolonial turn' of its own, just as the chronological, longstanding logic of colonialism and modernity has itself called for new cartographies of the world.[199] When it comes to translating Díaz's subversive incursions, particularly where they refer to a set of cultural and/or historical references assumed to be understood (even if only partially) by the original reader, it seems that the translator's allegiances can be sorely tried, as the new receiving audience may need additional information. Laurence Viallet's translation of *Oscar Wao* is particularly telling in that regard, as it favours, at times, better accessibility to the text by providing the reader with additional footnotes that are distinctly signposted from Díaz's own insertions and clearly attributed to the translator. When considering the following extracts, it appears that Díaz's and Viallet's versions of the text can sometimes follow slightly different, if not somehow competing logics:

The scandal! Remember the time and the place: Baní in the late fifties. […] Factor in that he'd been caught not with one of his own class (though that might have also been a problem) but with the scholarship girl, una prieta to boot. (The fucking	Quel scandale ! Rappelez-vous l'époque et le lieu : Baní à la fin des années cinquante. […] Notez bien que s'il ne s'était pas fait attraper avec une partenaire de la même classe sociale (même si ça aurait également pu poser problème) mais avec une boursière,

[198] In their joint introduction to *Junot Díaz and the Decolonial Imagination*, M. Hanna, J. Harford Vargas and J. D. Saldívar speak of 'a set of reciprocating colonial complicities between the United States and the Greater Antilles in the world-system' that Díaz has created in his fiction. See Monica Hanna, Jennifer Harford Vargas and José David Saldívar, eds, *Junot Díaz and the Decolonial Imagination* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2016), p. 1.

[199] See Nelson Maldonado-Torres's *Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008) in which the author argues that European modernity ultimately brings war in its wake, as well as Walter Mignolo's *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges and Border Thinking*, 2nd edn (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012).

of poor prietas was considered standard operating procedure for elites just as long as it was kept on the do-lo, what is elsewhere called the Strom Thurmond Maneuver.)[200]

une prieta par-dessus le marché. (Tringler les pauvres prietas était considéré parmi l'élite comme une procédure de rigueur, du moment que ça se faisait en loucedé, cette pratique ayant même été baptisée, ailleurs, La Méthode Strom Thurmond*.)

* En référence à James Strom Thurmond, homme politique américain, membre du Parti démocrate puis du Parti républicain (qui fut gouverneur de Caroline du Sud, candidat à la présidence des Etats-Unis et sénateur). Connu pour ses positions ségrégationnistes, il avait eu une fille illégitime avec sa bonne noire-américaine. (*N.d.T.)*[202]

You want a final conclusive answer to the Warren Commission's question, Who killed JFK? Let me, your humble Watcher, reveal once and for all the God's Honest Truth: It wasn't the mob or LBJ or the ghost of Marilyn Fucking Monroe. […] It was Trujillo; it was the fukú.[201]

Vous voulez une réponse ferme et définitive à la question posée par la Commission Warren : Qui a tué JFK ? Permettez à votre humble Gardien de vous révéler une fois pour toutes la Vérité Honnête de Dieu : C'était pas la mafia ni LBJ*, ni le putain fantôme de Marilyn Monroe. […] C'était Trujillo; c'était le fukú.

* Lyndon Baines Johnson, trente-sixième président des États-Unis d'Amérique, nommé vice-président, succéda à Kennedy lorsque celui-ci fut assassiné. (*N.d.T.)*[203]

[200] Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, p. 100.
[201] *Ibid*., p. 4.
[202] Junot Díaz, *La brève et merveilleuse vie d'Oscar Wao*, trans. by Laurence Viallet (Paris: Plon, 2009), pp. 113–114.
[203] *Ibid*., p. 16.

While Díaz's use of parenthetical, and to a larger extent, 'liminal'[204] comments functions as a site of diegetic interferences, Viallet's own addition of footnotes operates on a more conventional level, whereby the translator intervenes in the text to remove possible ambiguities and ease access to the cultural subtext for a Francophone reader who may well not be familiar with it. In the light of the author's (self-avowed) subversive use of paratext,[205] it could be argued that such a strategy on the part of the translator introduces a return to an aesthetics of normalization that runs counter to the 'decolonial turn' fostered by Díaz. The footnote on James Strom Thurmond, for example, focuses mainly on the politician's career achievements and mentions in passing 'sa bonne noire-américaine', relegating her to a shadowy figure, while Díaz's version focuses precisely on bringing to the fore subaltern figures, which in that case correspond to the (albeit anonymous) *prietas* who are presented as the victims of the patriarchal society he portrays.

More generally, the autographic footnotes present throughout *Oscar Wao* aim at indicting acts of blind acquiescence and *laissez-faire* in the face of dictatorship and xenophobia, so much so that whoever chooses to remain silent becomes a witness-accomplice of the situation, as the following passage suggests:

> As a general practice Abelard tried his best not to think about El Jefe at all, followed sort of the Tao of Dictator Avoidance, which was ironic considering that Abelard was unmatched in maintaining the outward appearance of the enthusiastic Trujillista.[24]
>
> [24.] But what was even more ironic was that Abelard had a reputation for being able to keep his head *down* during the worst of the regime's madness – for unseeing, as it were. In 1937, for example, while the Friends of the Dominican Republic were perejiling Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans and

[204] The term liminal is preferred to paratextual here for reasons similar to those underlined by Ellen McCracken, who talks of 'ports of entry' whilst distancing herself from Genette's terminology in context of J. Díaz's and S. Cisneros's works: 'Several decades after Genette's classic study, the model of the portal is useful to understand the reshaping function of paratexts. These ports of entry through which we navigate before, during, and after reading the text effectively reconstitute the literary work so that it is unstable and mutating.' Ellen McCracken*, Paratexts and Performance in the novels of Junot Díaz and Sandra Cisneros* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 5.

[205] McCracken further explores how the author uses paratext as a site of performance and focuses, for example, on the 23 interactive footnotes Díaz adds to footnote 32 of the novel on the *Poetry Genius* website in 2013. *Ibid*., p. 7. Also see < https://genius.com/Junot-diaz-the-brief-wondrous-life-of-oscar-wao-excerpt-annotated > [accessed 15 March 2017]

> Haitian-looking Dominicans to death, while genocide was, in fact, in the making, Abelard kept his head, eyes and nose safely tucked into his books […]. Acted like it was any other day.[206]

Abelard is a fictional character created by Díaz that allows the author to connect historical facts and figures with the 'hero's' own family, as Abelard is Oscar's grandfather. The verb 'perejiling' coined by the author, left in Spanish and in a regular font in the footnote translates onto the page the forced ingestion of parsley and encapsulates what Madelaine Hron has called 'the rhetoric of bodily pain' in her exploration of Maghrebi literature, which she sums up as follows: 'how the sufferings of immigration [or forced translation in the case of Hispaniola] may be conveyed by corporeal references, allusions to injury, pain, or malady, as well as metaphors of disease'[207]. Similarly, Danticat inscribes this incorporation of pain onto the body of her main character, Amabelle, who becomes the very embodiment of trauma, whereby linguistic violence is made flesh and the scars of the past become visible, indelible even: 'Now my flesh was simply a map of scars and bruises, a marred testament.'[208]

3.1.2. Translation, *Unheimlichkeit*, and the creation of a 'syncopated temporality'

The presence of linguistic difference and code switching in both novels corresponds to a poetics of translation that renders a certain 'cultural authenticity', as could be argued, by inserting here and there snippets of different languages supposed to express unfiltered experiences of trauma (Haitian Kreyòl and Spanish in the case of Danticat and mostly Spanglish or Dominican Spanish in the case of Díaz), whilst addressing global audiences in English. To a certain extent, linguistic difference can be interpreted as a counterpoint to a poetics of the lacunae often encountered in trauma studies as the consequence of the impropriety of language to authentically render emotions such as pain, grief or sadness into actual words. In fact, both Danticat and Díaz

[206] Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, pp. 214–215.
[207] Madelaine Hron, *Translating Pain: Immigrant Suffering in Literature and Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), kindle edition (p. 222).
[208] Danticat, *The Farming of Bones*, p. 227.

have recourse, at times, to a poetics of the lacunae[209] (using dashes, ellipses or typographical blanks among other techniques) but also offer personal reconfigurations of language. Díaz proposes an explicitly provocative 'non-transparent translation', whilst Danticat offers a palimpsestic type of translation that then suggests the presence of layers of interstitial inter-linguistic meaning and recalls, to a certain extent, Venuti's concept of the 'remainder' in translation.[210] Although her novel was written in English, its language retains layers of Haitian Kreyòl, as is exemplified by its very title, which corresponds to a loose contextualization of 'travay tè pou zo' in kreyòl, explained as 'the farming of bones' in the novel.[211] By retaining the intrinsic violence present in the Kreyòl proverb in the novel's title, Danticat illustrates what Paul Bandia has referred to as 'implicature' in his study of African proverbs translated for Western audiences in *Translation as Reparation*:

> Proverbs are by nature dependent upon implicature as a communicative strategy. The writer as translator faces the choice of whether to repress this implicature by compensating for it in the translating language (either through footnotes or by incorporating supplementary material in the translation) or to retain the remainder, that peculiar aspect of the proverb which eludes assimilation or domestication by the hegemonic colonial language.[212]

Her translation into English of the Haitian proverb thus preserves the essence of the original image and its connotations of violence and possible death, while eluding complete assimilation when carried across into English, as the title remains enigmatic. Conversely, the French translation has opted for a more transparent title, *La Récolte douce*

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[209] Myriam J. Chancy talks about a '*culture-lacune*' in her own experience as an immigrant, which she describes as 'having no identity, or as having one filled with holes with what in French are referred to as *lacunes*' but that could be overcome, at least in her case, 'by clinging to the vestiges of *creole* that lie dormant in [one's] mind and by preserving a sense of self in an area of [one's] consciousness that seems untranslatable.' Myriam J. Chancy, *Framing Silence: Revolutionary Novels by Haitian Women* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1997), p. 16.

[210] Venuti defines the remainder as follows: 'The collective force of linguistic forms that outstrips any individual's control and complicates intended meanings'. Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation. Towards an Ethics of Difference* (Routledge: London and New York, 1998), p. 108.

[211] Danticat, *The Farming of Bones*, p. 55.

[212] Paul Bandia, *Translation as Reparation: Writing and Translation in Postcolonial Africa* (Manchester, England & Kinderhook, NY: Saint Jerome Publishing, 2008), p. 86.

des larmes (trans. by Jacques Chabert) which conveys a trace of suffering, but associates it with a misleading sense of nostalgia absent from the original saying, while toning down the horror at the heart of the massacre that is suggested by the bones.[213] In her presentation of *El cultivo de huesos* (a title which retains, like Danticat's, the underlying Kreyòl proverb),[214] Jessica Fuentes Hernández informs the reader of her use of Caribbean Spanish and explains why she privileged Dominican words and expressions over Puerto Rican equivalents:

> Lo primero que consideré fue buscar frases equivalentes en la cultura puertorriqueña. Sin embargo, luego me di cuenta de que debía buscar una frase equivalente en la República Dominicana, ya que la obra se desarrolla en esta isla. Aunque caribeños, ambos pueblos también tienen diferencias culturales por razones históricas.[215]

The translator's choice not to transplant one Caribbean idiom or variant onto another, however close and easily understandable Dominican and Puerto Rican Spanish may be, suggests a poetics of 'diversality' that acknowledges and carries across the plurality of cultural and historical legacies of the Greater Caribbean. Similarly, by retaining the term 'chivo' rather than 'cabro' (for goat) which would be more familiar to a Puerto Rican reader, the translator also hints at intertextual connections that resituate Danticat's novel within a larger Latin American and Greater Caribbean context.[216] Thus, by opting for translation strategies that do not present transparent equivalents but ground its origins in linguistic (and therefore cultural and historical) difference, Danticat and

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[213] The English translation of René Philoctète's *Le Peuple des Terres Mêlées* invites to further reflection on editorial choices where titles are concerned, all the more so as the English translation by Linda Coverdale, *Massacre River* (New York: New Directions, 2005), connotes the horrors of the 1937 genocide, while the original title takes an opposite stance, focusing on harmony and cohabitation.

[214] Access to local resources and archives at the Universidad de Puerto Rico, Río Piedras, has been instrumental in comparing various existing translations of Danticat's novel, among which a translation into Spanish aimed at Puerto Rican readers and completed by a Master's student from UPR.

[215] Jessica Fuentes Hernández, 'El cultivo de huesos' (unpublished master thesis, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2000), p. xviii.

[216] 'En Puerto Rico, por lo general nos referimos a este animal como "cabro". Incluso en la cocina puertorriqueña figura el tradicional cabro o cabrito en fricasé. Sin embargo, en República Dominicana, suelen llamarlo chivo. El chivo es un animal muy significativo en la cultura dominicana, como puede dar fe la obra más reciente de Mario Vargas Llosa, *La fiesta del chivo*, que se desarrolla también bajo el régimen del general Trujillo." *Ibid*., p. xx.

Díaz's texts reach a state of 'afterlife'[217] when they follow a transnational, but above all a trans*l*ational logic of reception. It could even be argued that translation, understood both as linguistic transfer as well as geographical displacement here, offers a valid space of contestation for heretofore silenced or traumatised voices, provided that the language of rendition manages to avoid the pitfalls of mainstream market consumption when targeting global audiences. Such risks would entail giving in to what Elena Machado Sáez refers to as an 'effortless and uncomplicated' process of absorption in her study of *Market Aesthetics* and the promotion of postcolonial ethics, whereby translation would then face the dangers of commodifying ethnic or exotic literatures, lest it should not be guided by a poetics of polyphonic decentring. [218]

As Sebastien observes in *The Farming of Bones*, self-naming was and remains of prime importance in Hispaniola: '[t]hey say we [*braceros*] are the crud at the bottom of the pot. They say some people don't belong anywhere and that's us. I say we are a group of vwayajè, wayfarers'.[219] By displacing the disgrace associated with his people ('crud at the bottom of the pot') and translating it into *vwayajè*, a term that brings to mind pilgrims and pioneers, Sebastien transforms the notion of *Unheimlichkeit* into a powerful force that turns Haitian outcasts into potential harbingers of change. The fact that Kreyòl is the language chosen to carry across this positive and somehow elevating characteristic further stresses the importance of the vernacular as an instrument of resistance to assimilation and oppression here.

In fact, *Unheimlichkeit* or aiming towards a sense of unfamiliarity and the uncanny where it applies to translation, could be interpreted, in both novels, as part of a strategy

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[217] In reference to Walter Benjamin and his 'Task of the Translator'.

[218] Machado Sáez focuses on diasporic Caribbean authors who write historical fiction and observes the following: 'Since Caribbean diasporic writers are positioned at the intersection of ethnic and world literatures, local and global histories, multicultural and postcolonial discourses, I argue that these authors have more in common with each other than with isolated ethnic or island literary traditions: first, their work expresses a postcolonial ethics of historical revision, and second, it struggles with the marketability of ethnicity. The novels strive to educate the mainstream readership about marginalized histories and avoid reifying any stereotypes their readers might bring to the text, chiefly the perception that ethnic writers should translate their cultures for effortless and uncomplicated market consumption.' Elena Machado Sáez, 'Introduction: Marketing Multicultural Ethnics, Promoting Postcolonial Ethics', *Market Aesthetics: The Purchase of the Past in Caribbean Diasporic Fiction* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015), p. 2.

[219] Danticat, *The Farming of Bones*, p. 56.

consisting in destabilizing the normative, and to a certain extent, repressive nature of a monolinguist approach. As Edwin Gentzler explains in his introduction to *Translation and Identity in the Americas*, translation has been a powerful, far from neutral instrument in the region, and when used as a repressive tool, has been the cause of a 'loss of identity and psychological trauma'.[220] It comes with no surprise then that diasporic writers Díaz and Danticat work on renegotiating the power imbalance initially present in the Caribbean, offering, each on their own terms, a refashioning of language that entails a complete turning of tables and a two-fold understanding of *Unheimlichkeit*: a concept that both recalls the experience of trauma linked to displacement which breeds a sense of unfamiliarity and loss, but one that also functions as a potential antidote to assimilationist enterprises. In *Oscar Wao*, the multiple allusions to the need to fill in the '*páginas en blanco*' of History – and, precisely, not its blank pages – reveal Díaz's strategy to both deconstruct and destabilize hegemonic discourses and try and redress this imbalance from marginal spaces and through 'subaltern', heretofore silenced voices. In Danticat's novel, this dual reading of *Unheimlichkeit* can be found in the chronological breaks that interrupt the narrator's testimony. In *The Farming of Bones*, the main plot is clearly distinguished from what could be called dream sequences in which Amabelle is revisiting her past but is also trying to re-member, that is both recall and refashion, the trauma she experienced, to 'pass it on', even if only in silence. The present tense used in those sequences adds a sense of immediacy that 'confirms the inseparability of past and present within the space of (traumatic) memory'.[221] This blending of time creates a temporal disjointedness, also present in *Oscar Wao*. While Danticat's use of the dream sequences may arguably be interpreted as an expression of the return of the repressed, in Díaz's text it plays with the notion of *fukú*, a Dominican Spanish expression used to convey the idea of a streak of bad luck, and deconstructs chronological time by going backwards and forwards in space as well as in time, recalling, somehow Kurt Vonnegut's hero, Billy Pilgrim, who 'has come

[220] Gentzler, *Translation and Identity in the Americas: New Directions in Translation Theory*, p. 3.

[221] In her study of *Aube tranquille* and *Le Peuple des terres mêlées*, in 'Present-ing the past', Kaiama L. Glover analyses the conflation of past and present in the memory of trauma survivors, and more especially in the case of alienated women as the manifestation of a 'deeply unhomed condition', Kaiama L. Glover, *Haiti Unbound: A Spiralist Challenge to the Postcolonial Canon* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), p. 140.

unstuck in time' after witnessing the bombing of Dresden in *Slaughterhouse-Five*. Díaz further destabilizes his narrative by inserting science-fiction references – a strategy he shares, once again, with Vonnegut –, incursions that put to the test the expected sense of authenticity that the narrator-witness is supposed to be entrusted with. In fact, science-fiction allows the *Unheimlich*, all the unspeakable aspects pertaining to trauma, to be recounted through an unusual narrative frame which could eventually help make sense of otherwise unfathomable actions when transposed to the realm of the supernatural.

Caribbean experiences are thus inscribed within a 'syncopated temporality', whereby chronological time is out of synch and comes to represent discontinued and scattered, diasporic realities.[222] Translating Caribbean traumas is thus anchored in deferment (as both narratives are told in hindsight) and displacement (as both are written mostly in English and aimed primarily at global, not necessarily Caribbean-restricted audiences). Ultimately, then, the survivor's testimonial bears the stamp of a linguistic difference that echoes past traumas but also paves the way for the building of a transcultural memory. The choice not to translate into English expressions left in Spanish or Kreyòl therefore corresponds to a view of translation that should not aim for transparency, and opts instead for positing the unintelligibility of the world as a Caribbean condition, which entails living in the contact zone of colonial and neo-colonial encounters, whether it is somewhere in the Antilles or in diaspora.

3.1.3. Translational sites of re-covery

> To cross the threshold from life to death and from death to afterlife is *to be translated, to be in translation*. Translation is the mode through which what is dead, disappeared, forgotten, buried, or suppressed overcomes its determined fate by being borne (and thus born anew) to other contexts across time and space, as famously asserted by Salman Rushdie: "I, too, am a translated man. I have been borne across. It is generally believed that something is always lost in translation; I cling to the notion… that something can also be gained."[223]

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[222] 'Gilroy probes the specific "diaspora temporality and historicity, memory and narrativity that are the articulating principles of the black political counter-cultures that grew inside modernity in a distinctive relationship of antagonistic indebtedness" (1993a:266). Arguing against both modernist linear progressivism and current projections of a continuous connection with Africanity, he uncovers a "syncopated temporality – a different rhythm of living and being" (Gilroy 1993a:281).' James Clifford, 'Diasporas', *Cultural Anthropology*, 9, 3 (August 1994), 302–308 (p. 317).

[223] Bella Brodzki, *Can These Bones Live?* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), p. 6.

In addition to Díaz and Danticat's novels, this section will focus on the re-telling of the 1937 massacre by Caribbean writers from neighbouring islands of the Greater Caribbean, principally from Cuba and Puerto Rico, to interrogate whether the traumatic experience lived in Hispaniola can be re-presented and transplanted onto other Caribbean landscapes, and if so, whether a transcultural memory based on a poetics of archipelagic re-membering may be envisioned for the region.

In her collection of short stories *Encancaranublado y otros cuentos de naufragio*, Ana Lydia Vega transplants the original massacre onto a contemporary Puerto Rican setting in 'El dia de los hechos', focusing on the owner of a laundromat of Haitian descent found dead on the floor of his establishment:

> Fue durante la semana roja de no acordarse. El Benefactor había proclamado la muerte haitiana a todo lo largo del Masacre. La dominicanización de la frontera estaba en marcha. […] Un brillo de armas filosas prendió el batey. A las seis de la mañana, Paula frotaba el piso con un cepillo para hacerle vomitar sangre de haitiano a las tablas sedientas. Por eso, aquel día, Filemón Sagredo hijo, descendiente de tantos filemones matados y matones, estaba de cara en el Laundry Quisqueya de Río Piedras.[224]

The story juxtaposes elements of the original killing (with the mention of the river 'el Masacre') and goes even further back in time with the underlying presence of slavery (through the use of the term 'batey'),[225] whilst making clear references to Puerto Rico, with its popular neighbourhood of Río Piedras, for example. The initial site of ethnic cleansing is thus transposed onto another Caribbean island, a movement that invites a broader reflection on the treatment of ethnic and linguistic difference in the region. Vega further stresses the potentially divisive nature of linguistic difference present in the region in the title story of her collection, 'Encancaranublado', where she brings together three characters of Haitian, Dominican and Cuban descent on a boat bound for the US. In the

[224] Ana LydiaVega, 'El dia de hechos', *Encancaranublado y otros cuentos de naufragio*, 7th ed. (Editorial Antillana, San Juan: 2001), pp. 25–26.

[225] Note again the importance of the *batey* as a site of liminal resistance in Mayra Montero's *Del Rojo de su sombra* (Barcelona: Tusquets Editores, 1998), or John Gilmore's footnote to his translation of Juan Bosch's 'Encarnación Mendoza's Christmas Eve' (pp. 32–33).

story, the Haitian character is represented as a negative foil to his Dominican counterpart, yet, the initial tensions that arise between the two characters soon lead to a broader reflection on Caribbean identity. A sense of belonging, or conversely, of exclusion seems to be guided by realities of linguistic difference as well as ethnic discrimination:

> - Get those niggers down there and let the *spiks* take care of 'em.
>
> Palabras que los incultos héroes no entendieron tan bien como nuestros bilingües lectores. Y tras de las cuales, los antillanos fueron cargados sin ternura hasta la cala del barco donde, entre cajas de madera y baúles mohosos, compartieron su primera mirada post naufragio: mixta de alivio y de susto sofrita en esperanzas ligeramente sancochadas.
>
> Minutos después, el dominicano y el cubano tuvieron la grata experiencia de escuchar su lengua materna, algo maltratada pero siempre reconocible […].[226]

The use of the derogatory 'spiks' during the rescue scene here as well as the reference to Puerto Rican Spanish being a bastardized version of Dominican or Cuban Spanish ('su lengua maternal, algo maltratada pero siempre reconocible') denounces practices of linguistic profiling that took a deadly turn during the Parsley Massacre and continue, to some extent, to permeate everyday life and exchanges in the Caribbean.[227]

A poetics of translation based on a re-appraisal of linguistic difference and an appreciation of polyphonic variations can, in such a light, turn into a highly disruptive tool against discriminatory discourses that are defined by normative lines of language-nation equivalency. In *The Farming of Bones*, the refusal to say *perejil* and the decision to opt for the Kreyòl *pèsi* in the face of death, clearly inscribe the vernacular within a

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[226] Ana LydiaVega, 'Encancaranublado', *Encancaranublado y otros cuentos de naufragio*, 7th edn (Editorial Antillana, San Juan: 2001), p. 20. The emphases are mine.

[227] In her liminary note to *Del rojo de su sombra*, Mayra Montero introduces her novel in the following manner: 'Cada año, en la isla de Española, decenas de miles de haitianos cruzan la frontera desde Haiti para emplearse como picadores de caña en la República Dominicana. Estos haitianos o "congos", como les llaman al otro lado de la frontera, arrastran consigo a sus mujeres e hijos, sin excepción, les espera una vida de privaciones y miserias sin cuento, en condiciones de trabajo calcadas de los más crueles regímenes esclavistas.' Mayra Montero, *Del rojo de su sombra*, 2nd edn (Barcelona: Tusquets Editores, 1998), p. 9. The use of the present tense here may be compared with Danticat's dream sequences that punctuate *The Farming of Bones*, in the sense that they participate in conveying the repetitive, haunting nature of traumatic experiences such as slavery or ethnic cleansing that cannot be assimilated by the survivors and keep returning to haunt them and their descendants.

poetics of courage and dignity that resists assimilation and somehow enables to reach a state of transcendence:

> [Odette] mouthed in Kreyòl 'pési', […] no effort to say 'perejil'
> as if pleading for her life.
> […]
> To the devil with your world, your grass, your wind, your water,
> your air, your words. You ask for perejil, I give you more.[228]

However, translation may also ironically turn into a double-edged sword, particularly when no longer operating within the interstices of difference and displacement, as is the case in *Oscar Wao*. In the following scene, translation brings about the death of the Caribbean individual, who, by providing his assassins with the English equivalent of *fuego* actually utters a performative cry that signs his own death warrant:

> They waited respectfully for him to finish and then they said,
> their faces slowly disappearing in the gloom, Listen, we'll let you
> go if you tell us what *fuego* means in English.
>
> Fire, he blurted out, unable to help himself.
>
> Oscar –[229]

In the Spanish translation,[230] the English term 'fire' replaces the original Spanish, to reproduce the effect of code-switching already at work in Díaz's text, whilst the French version cleverly expands the initial bilingual contrast at work in the novel: 'Écoute, on veut bien te laisser filer si tu nous dis comment on dit *fuego* dans *ta langue*'[231] (emphasis mine on 'ta langue'). Oscar utters the performative cry of 'feu', as if sharing the reader's idiom, when he is supposed to be living in the United States, therefore calling into question the reader's suspension of disbelief, or at the very least, reminding him/her that the credibility of the text lies perhaps elsewhere than in its capacity to render translation 'invisible'. This episode aside, *Oscar Wao* could moreover be said to function as a polyphonic counter spell to the curse the Caribbean has been initially placed under (fukú),

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[228] Danticat, *The Farming of Bones*, p. 203.
[229] Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, p. 322.
[230] Junot Díaz, *La breve y maravillosa vida de Óscar Wao*, trans. by Achy Obejas (Barcelona: Debols!llo, 2009), p. 317.
[231] Díaz, *La brève et merveilleuse vie d'Oscar Wao*, p. 333.

particularly in its rendering of a subterranean poetics of the threshold, in which the inner recesses of the text and its margins, taking the form of footnotes, parenthetical asides or ellipses, help recover hidden layers of history and heretofore silenced experiences of trauma. Danticat opts for an afterword that takes the form of a tribute to the victims of the 1937 massacre as well as to 'those who are still toiling in the cane fields', which also bears the mark of multilingualism as a site of transcultural memory, as her acknowledgments are expressed in Kreyòl, Spanish and English.[232] Even if those traces of mediation, which are overtly present in *Oscar Wao*, yet more subtle in *The Farming of Bones,* recall the necessity to beware of the agency and reliability of any witness-narrator, such traces can also be read as displaced fragments of writing in translation that attempts to conjugate and accommodate both local and transnational memories. Ultimately, then, when read as multilingual accounts that accept to restore multiple, mobile and intricate identities, both novels could be said to promote a poetics of translation situated at the crossroads, a poetics of dis-location emerging here and there in the transitive spaces of in-betweenness – acts of translation that free memories of trauma from the shackles of assimilation and oblivion.

3.2. Re-mapping Caribbean hybridities in translational sutures

3.2.1. Translation as 'unhoming'

As has been argued, *Oscar Wao* is replete with postmodern incursions in which the narrator attempts to do away with the illusion of an uninterrupted reading experience and stresses instead the strands of the yarn he is spinning. It has also been claimed that in his novel, Díaz uses paratext as a site of authorial performance that is in no way subservient to the main text but functions rather as an extension of it, and as such, both text and footnotes should be read as a whole:

> If readers allow themselves to be immersed in the linguistic spectacularity of the performance of ethnicity in both text and

[232] '*Mèsi Anpil, Mucho Gracias, Thank You Very Much*… […] And the very last words, last on the page but always first in my memory, must be offered to those who died in the massacre of 1937, to those who survived to testify, and to the constant struggle of those who still toil in the cane fields.' Danticat, *The Farming of Bones*, pp. 311–312.

> notes, a continuity of discursive flow overlays the slight visual separation of the notes and text on the printed page, forming a continuum. Even the self-referential footnotes, which remind us that the text is a construct, are overlain with performative spectacularity.[233]

Such a reading of autographic paratext allows us to reposition the off-text (mainly footnotes in the case of Díaz) on a par, but above all in dialogue with the text itself, no longer considering it as optional, of secondary importance and reliant on the main narrative. However, this section wishes to focus on how such sites function as visible and even conspicuous sutures (when considering *Oscar Wao* in particular), but also as sites that can help rethink translation as a form of 'unhoming'. As Mireille Rosello argues, 'unhoming' corresponds to a process whereby 'both the host and the guest accept, in different ways, the uncomfortable and sometimes painful possibility of being changed by the other'[234]. In other words, when thinking translation along these lines, the clear-cut boundaries separating original and revision tend to be blurred, and notions such as *Unheimlichkeit* acquire new dimensions. In the context of trauma narratives that deal with the Parsley Massacre, translating such accounts amounts to displacing, or 'un-homing' the pain originally experienced; the process may raise ethical concerns about authorial reliability (as the author is not a direct witness of the trauma described), all the more so when dealing with texts that are marketed for global audiences and later translated from this premise. After all, if translating trauma narratives becomes akin to performing acts of stitching[235] (back) together fragments of Caribbean histories, speaking from more than one site of remembrance, across the Caribbean and beyond, thus from more than one site of experience, necessarily entails multiple acts of witnessing, which positions the translator both as an heir (who inherits several layers of historical and authorial legacies) and as a proprietor (as (s)he co-signs the text, intervenes on it, and, in turn, participates

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[233] Ellen McCracken, *Paratexts and Performance in the novels of Junot Díaz and Sandra Cisneros*, p. 57.

[234] Mireille Rosello, *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 176.

[235] Díaz plays with the metaphor of stitching in his text, linking the (self-aware) act of spinning his tale with the making (or undoing) of History: 'The world was coming apart at the seams – Santo Domingo was in the middle of a total meltdown, the Trujillato was tottering, police blockades on every corner – and even the kids she'd gone to school with, the brightest and the best, were being swept up by the Terror.' Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, p. 129.

in its cross-cultural transmission). When considering the 'original' texts under study already as 'translations' of the event of 1937 and its aftermath, the ensuing linguistic versions that exist of them, whether in French or in Spanish, become third-hand acts of witnessing. The texts are further 'un-homed', that is distanced from an originary experience that remains unaccounted for and was already filtered through the secondary act of witnessing performed by the narrator in the 'original'. In the case of Danticat, as *The Farming of Bones* draws to a close, the main character Amabelle, who survives the massacre and finds refuge in Haiti, meets one last time with her former Dominican employer Señora Valencia. She recalls the encounter as follows:

> "We lived in a time of massacres." She [Señora Valencia] breathed out loudly. "Before Papi died, all he did was listen on his radio to stories of different kinds of … cortes, from all over the world. It is a marvel that some of us are still here, to wait and hope to die a natural death."
> All the time I had known her, we had always been dangling between being strangers and being friends. Now we were neither strangers nor friends. We were like two people passing each other on the street, exchanging a lengthy meaningless greeting. And at last I wanted it to end.[236]

Interestingly, the Spanish word used to describe the Parsley Massacre is retained in Danticat's version as well as in its French translation,[237] suggesting that the genocide that took place in Hispaniola was but one specific occurrence of repeated violence throughout the world. Moreover, in this scene, Amabelle offers a reflection on the sense of fragmentation dividing Haitians and Dominicans, as they seem unable to either cohabitate or, on the contrary, to live apart, inhabiting instead a limbo zone of estranged familiarity, being 'neither strangers nor friends'. This situation echoes Homi K. Bhabha's notion of the 'third space', in relation to which the author establishes a distinction between cultural diversity and cultural difference, arguing that the former remains guided by a norm of transparency that manages to contain difference, whereas the latter allows more leeway to retrieve repressed histories.[238] It seems that Bhabha's definition of cultural

[236] Danticat, *The Farming of Bones*, p. 300.
[237] Danticat, *La Récolte douce des larmes*, p. 322.
[238] 'A transparent norm is constituted, a norm given by the host society or dominant culture, which says that 'these other cultures are fine, but we must be able to locate them within our own grid'. This is what I mean by

difference[239] corresponds to what Díaz and Danticat have attempted to stress in their narratives, namely the insertion of elements that convey both a sense of familiarity as well as of alterity, by foregrounding the languages in contact with each other. But what happens when texts dealing with the trauma experienced in Hispaniola are carried across, later on, by a(nother) translator?

In her translation into English of René Philoctète's *Massacre River*, Linda Coverdale provides the reader with endnotes in which she clarifies several historical references, along with cultural, mostly religious elements. She also adds a note to her translation, in which she reveals the stages she went through for the English version to come into existence, as already pointed out in Chapter 2, and offers a justification for the insertion of endnotes:

> Philoctète's many references and allusions are like wormholes whisking the reader instantly into other times and places, sometimes into whole universes of glory and grievance, mystery and horror. The endnotes explain the major (and a few minor) blips in the text where the author's Haitian readership would know exactly what is at stake, while the average (or even reasonably well-informed) American reader would be essentially clueless.[240]

Unlike Díaz's playful use of different temporal and spatial planes, Coverdale favors coherence and clarity over disruption and possible opacity, thereby leaning towards what Bhabha calls 'cultural diversity' rather than 'cultural difference'. The paratext she adds to Philoctète's text aims at re-anchoring it in a political and historical context, rather than further un-homing it for the American reader. Similarly, Mayra Montero inserts a glossary at the end of *Del rojo de su sombra*, in the hope of facilitating the reading experience, as she explains: 'Las palabras con asterisco se hallan en el Diccionario de la Real Academia Española, pero se incluyen en el Glosario para facilitar

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a *creation* of cultural diversity and a *containment* of cultural difference.' Jonathan Rutherford, 'The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha', *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. by J. Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), p. 208.

[239] 'With the notion of cultural difference, I try to place myself in that position of liminality, in that productive space of the construction of culture as difference, in the spirit of alterity or otherness.' *Ibid*., p. 209.

[240] René Philoctète, *Massacre River*, trans. by Linda Coverdale (New York: New Direction Books, 2005), p. 219.

la lectura de la novela.'[241] Words pertaining to a Caribbean setting, such as 'batey', are therefore listed among the entries; however, Montero does not signpost those terms in the text by either italicizing or using asterisks. Instead, her paratext seems to follow the logic of 'cultural difference', inasmuch as her glossary entries recreate liminal spaces where alterity and otherness are sited within one idiom, Spanish. Thus, as Bhabha observes:

> The 'originary' is always open to translation so that it can never be said to have a totalised prior moment of being or meaning – an essence. What this really means is that cultures are only constituted in relation to that otherness internal to their own symbol-forming activity which makes them decentred structures – through that displacement or liminality opens up the possibility of articulating *different*, even incommensurable cultural practices and priorities.[242]

In other words, the author's version is already un-homed and is a language that is both in contact with itself (through the use of Caribbean Spanish expressions) and with other idioms (mostly Kreyòl and French). *Del Rojo de su sombra* opens with a Haitian slave song in Kreyòl and inserts many local terms and expressions, mostly pertaining to religious practices, that are also carried across in the English translation by Edith Grossman.[243] Whilst the term 'amarre' requires an explanation for the reader in both versions (Grossman has faithfully reproduced most of Montero's entries in her own glossary and translates the term transparently as 'a certain kind of spell'[244]), it nonetheless remains inserted as such, with limited, if no cushioning whatsoever in both texts:

Nunca lo *amarraron*. Nunca se rompió. Tres o cuatro años atrás el Gagá de Zulé solía partir como una tromba el Viernes Santo, y cuando regresaba intacto, el Domingo de Resurrección, lo hacía cargando con más ofrendas que cansancio. Así había sido por mucho tiempo, sin	They never *put an amarre on* Zulé's Gagá. The Gagá was never broken. Three or four years earlier it would set out like a whirlwind on Good Friday and return intact on Easter Sunday, more weighted down with offerings than weariness. This is how it had been for a long time, with no need for

[241] Montero, *Del rojo de su sombra*, p. 181.

[242] Rutherford, 'The Third Space: Interview with Homi Bhabha', *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, pp. 210–211.

[243] For the liminal song in Kreyòl, see Mayra Montero, *Del rojo de su sombra*, p. 13.

[244] Mayra Montero, *The Red of His Shadow*, trans. by E. Grossman (New York: Harper and Collins, 2001), p. 157. See Montero's own entry: '*Amarre*: nombre que comúnmente se utiliza para denominar cierta clase de hechizo.' Montero, *Del rojo de su sombra*, p. 181.

necesidad de trueques ni de alianzas.[245] (emphasis mine)	exchanges or alliances.[246] (emphasis mine)

Montero coins a verb out of 'amarre', without giving further clues as to the meaning of 'amarrar', whilst Grossman hints at its semantic proximity with 'spell' through her verbal construction with 'put'. The surrounding religious context, in which Christian holidays are intertwined with the mention of a 'Gagá', explained as a 'socioreligious form of worship'[247] in the glossary, also help infer the meaning of 'amarre'. Returning to *The Farming of Bones* and *Oscar Wao*, it is worth noting that neither text, in their original 'translation', includes a glossary or endnotes, despite their use of interlingual variations, although it should be added that Danticat usually cushions her text with English phrases that translate her Spanish and Kreyòl expressions. As both texts were initially published in the United States and were soon marketed for international audiences through an acquisition of translation rights,[248] such a strategy seems legitimate, as it brings the reader closer to the text, whilst still giving them the flavor of a 'true' (although fictitious) account of the 1937 massacre thanks to the addition, here and there, of Kreyòl and Dominican expressions that help authenticate the text. It could be argued that those traces and sutures of linguistic difference in both novels, and, to a certain extent, in Montero and Vega's texts as well, also illustrate a sense of hybridity and unhomeliness characteristic of Caribbean literature. Thus, while it remains rare for a Caribbean-based writer to acquire international recognition when being (solely) published by a local, often small press with very limited print-runs,[249] it should be stressed that, conversely, most diasporic writers contribute to (re)locating Caribbean literature at the

[245] Montero, *Del rojo de su sombra*, p. 21.
[246] Montero, *The Red of His Shadow*, p. 6.
[247] *Ibid*., p. 158.
[248] Random House Mondadori (Barcelona) acquired the rights in 2008 for Díaz's text to be published in Spanish, one year after its original release, in English, for the North American market. Similarly, *La Récolte douce des larmes* was published in 1999, that is one year after the London edition used for referencing in this chapter came out.
[249] Ana Lydia Vega's collection of short stories published by the Puerto Rican publisher Antillana figures as an exception to the other texts cited in the chapter, although it must also be noted that Mayra Montero has similarly been extensively published in the Caribbean before her books were published in Spain, as was the case with *Del rojo de su sombra*.

intersection of the global and the local. In the process, they may have to anticipate readerly expectations, but, when it comes to translating trauma narratives, it seems that inhabiting the thresholds of 'in-between[ness]' provides Caribbean writers with a rich interstitial space from where transnational as well as trans*l*ational models can eventually help transcend issues of inclusion and exclusion, as well as disputes over claims of universalism and particularism. As Bhabha suggests:

> Private and public, past and present, the psyche and the social develop an interstitial intimacy. […] These spheres of life are linked through an 'in-between' temporality that takes the measure of dwelling at home, while producing an image of the world of history. This is the moment of aesthetic distance that provides the narrative with a double edge, which like the coloured South African subject represents a hybridity, a difference 'within', a subject that inhabits the rim of an 'in-between' reality. And the inscription of this borderline existence inhabits a stillness of time and a strangeness of framing that creates the discursive 'image' at the crossroads of history and literature, bridging the home and the world.[250]

The Parsley Massacre, with its literary appeal and still ongoing 'translations' in the Caribbean and beyond, thus resonates with other types of trauma narratives (Holocaust literature comes to mind here) that, when read in an archipelagic, nonlinear, non-vertical mode, ultimately bring about the shattering of the three unities of Time, Space… and History.

3.2.2. Towards thresholds of reciprocal hospitality?

Atibô Legbá, l'uvri bayè pu mwê, agoé!
Papa-Legbá, l'uvri bayè pu mwê,
Pi mwê pasé.
(Atibo Legbá, open the gate for me!
Papa-Legbá, open the gate
so I can go in.)[251]

In *Del rojo de su sombra* and its English version, the Haitian chorus opening this section is sung by a group of women, whose performance is presented as an act of

[250] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 19.
[251] Montero, *The Red of His Shadow*, p. 10.

resistance, since the song is said to be 'seditious'[252]. Legba, a *loa* in Haitian vodou, is invoked as a gatekeeper who can grant access to a protected, enclosed space and is generally presented as the guardian of gates and crossroads. In a similar vein, the translator of Caribbean literature can be seen as an interstitial figure, a secondary witness who not only receives trauma narratives emerging from Hispaniola to transmit them in turn, but also leaves his (or her) own traces in the then (twice) removed account (when, once again, the 'original' is itself deemed a 'translation'[253]), and as such acts as a gatekeeper, amongst a series of varying cultural agents, who may (or may not) choose to retain certain elements of the text (s)he carries across. In such a context, the aim here is to test whether literary representations of trauma experienced in the Caribbean may, through translational enterprises, eventually lead to archipelagic reciprocities that overcome (neo)colonial, linguistic and sociocultural borders and create, instead, regenerative forms of hospitality between 'host' and 'guest' cultures.

Even as *The Farming of Bones* draws to a conclusion and the reader knows that Amabelle has survived the massacre, when she decides to cross the Massacre back into the Dominican Republic to pay a final visit to her former mistress Señora Valencia, the natural boundary formed by the river that divides the two countries in Hispaniola remains doubly marked:

> At first glance, the Massacre appeared like any of the three or four large rivers in the north of Haiti. On a busy market day, it was simply a lively throughway beneath a concrete bridge, where women sat on boulders at the water's edge to pound their clothes clean, and mules and oxen stopped to diminish their thirst. […] On the bridge, young soldiers whose faces looked too youthful to hold a past marched back and forth, patrolling the line marked by a chain that separated our country from theirs. […] Our soldiers stayed farther back, away from the bridge, in the customshouse near an open road, the better to watch for invaders.

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[252] *Ibid*.

[253] Paolo Zaccaria's reflection on the translation of liminality as a performance of transnationalism comes to mind here: 'The translator does not translate the original language into the foreign language, but s/he tries to dis-remember, dismember the language s/he has been introduced into the world with, in order to leave space for the sounds, the rhythms, the images, the meanings of the language s/he has chosen to know, the language which s/he has selected as one of her/his personal keys to listen to and apprehend other languages – finally s/he lets traces of the other (language) breathe, rise to the surface in the native language.' Paola Zaccaria, 'Translating Borders, Performing Trans-nationalism', *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*, 4, Special Issue (Summer 2006), 57–70 (p. 60).

> The border had lost a number of its trees. Holes were still too evident where the trees had been plucked out and replaced with poles that held up doubled strands of barbed wire. All along the walls of spiked metal were signs that cautioned travelers to cross anba fil, beneath the wires.[254]

Here, the presence of soldiers and barbed wire, as well as of signs in Kreyòl warning against any attempts at crossing, transforms the contact zone of the river into a site of neighbourly hostilities, where violence is pervasive and has come to disrupt the natural order of life (trees have not simply been felled, they have been 'plucked out', and armed men have come to replace peaceful, daily human activities, such as cattle grazing and outdoor laundering, for instance). The scene illustrates moreover a point that Emily Apter raises about checkpoints and sovereign borders in *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*, in which she denounces the (often) too metaphorical understanding of contact zones when it comes to border theory, particularly where the field of translation studies is concerned. Instead, Apter privileges a return to a more pragmatic, realistic analysis based on everyday life encounters:

> In each of these projects by artists, architects and writers [studied in the course of the chapter under study], we see the translation zone defined not as a porous boundary facilitating supranational comity and regimes of general equivalence but as a threshold of untranslatability and political blockade. In bringing back the checkpoint to undercut the way in which translation studies has flaccidly appropriated metaphors of border-crossing, the aim has been to insist on the persistence of the function of state police within the field of language politics.[255]

Apter's point is particularly salient when it comes to the actual circulation of translated (regional) literature within the Caribbean. As will be seen more in depth in the course of chapters 6 and 7, Caribbean literature traditionally relies on international literary centres, such as London, New York or Paris, to name but a few, to then circulate (back) in the region. It should also be noted that due to linguistic and colonial legacies, some territories and islands of the Caribbean are relatively cut off from each other, at least culturally speaking; works by Francophone Caribbean writers remain, for example, few

[254] Danticat, *The Farming of Bones*, pp. 284–285.
[255] Emily Apter, *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*, p. 114.

and far between in most Puerto Rican bookstores (at least on the island), even in translation. Concurrently, little Puerto Rican literature has been translated into French and thus enjoys very limited circulation in mainland France as well as in its overseas territories.[256] However, those observations should also be placed alongside studies that chiefly focus on intra-regional circulation, so as to fine-tune our analysis and see whether pan-Caribbean transculturality, taking the form of multilingual literary incentives, actually occurs. Emilio Jorge Rodríguez suggests, on the one hand, that such transnational collaborations exist and can transcend cultural and linguistic barriers, particularly when the sea is taken as a binding element that unites most Caribbean islands and territories.[257] He also insists on the role played by translation in such endeavours and mentions his own experience, evoking the Spanish version of Jacques Stéphen Alexis's *L'Espace d'un cillement*:

> Además de ser mi primer trabajo publicado y de lo emotivo que significaba la aparición en letra de imprenta de un texto personal, era el inicio de una interminable pasión hacia Haití, que se reforzaría al encomendárseme, inmediatamente después, la edición cubana de su novel *El compadre General Sol* (Casa de las Américas, 1974). De manera que me tocó la tarea de revisar la traducción de *Compère Général Soleil* que sería utilizada como base para esa edición, en la cual era necesario, como en otras ocasiones, expurgar un lenguaje que a todas luces no armonizaba con lo caribeño. Se trataba, en esencia, de ajustar los giros lingüísticos a partir de una identificación con el habla y la escritura caribeña, y situar notas al pie para una mayor comprensión por el lector latinoamericano.[258]

[256] The notable exception of Luis Rafael Sánchez's *La Rengaine qui déchaîne Germaine* has been highlighted in Chapter 2. The more recent translation of Mayra Santos-Febres's *Sirena Selena*, trans. by François-Michel Durazzo (Paris: Zulma, 2017) is also worth mentioning.

[257] Rodríguez adopts a 'trans-Caribbean' stance in his study, arguing that 'a comparative approach should not be limited to the selective juxtaposition of national literary histories without consideration of the peculiarities of cultural life of the region. Actually, it is possible to undertake a comparative reading of Caribbean literatures using the sea as a nexus of connection and fusion – as Kamau Brathwaite proclaims – and not, as is customary, in terms of division and demarcation as has traditionally been done.' Emilio Jorge Rodríguez, *Haiti and Trans-Caribbean Literary Identity/Haití y la transcaribeñidad literaria*, trans. by María Teresa Ortega (Philipsburg, St. Martin: House of Nehesi, 2011), p. 171.

[258] *Ibid*., p. vii.

Here, translation is presented as a unifying element bringing together the Caribbean and Latin America, an enterprise that, according to Rodríguez, entails amendments as well as expurgations to create a sense of communal, transregional identification for readers who should not be left in the dark, hence the insertion of footnotes promoted by the reviewer to facilitate access to the (sub)text. Such a view of translation privileges the reception of the text, by which the 'guest' culture (which does not correspond to the French original here, but to the existing Spanish version by Aida Aisenson, published in Buenos Aires) undergoes necessary changes to then be deemed valid to enter the 'host' culture (Cuba in this case). In this particular example, hospitality is presented as a gesture that welcomes the already translated text so long as it is brought closer to the reader, a view that stands in stark contrast with Schleiermacher's recommendation 'to leave the writer in peace and move the reader toward the writer'[259]. Or does it, really? It seems, rather, that the Spanish version published in Argentina is transplanted back into an original, yet different Caribbean setting whereby the translator (the reviewer, more precisely, in that case) cannot be said to either strictly betray or remain faithful to the writer, as his work inscribes itself upon an already existing translation. Keeping the present example in mind, it may be argued that translation can become an act of reciprocal hospitality, whereby the two Caribbean islands of Haiti and Cuba are connected (back) to each other.

On the other hand, several studies have shown the need for more incentives of the kind, particularly where further intertextualities between Haitian and Dominican literary cultures are concerned. Freddy Prestol Castillo's *El Masacre se pasa a pie* is often cited as a case in point, as this Dominican account of the Parsley Massacre written a few years after the actual genocide, had to wait until 1973 to be published in Santo Domingo.[260] Similarly, the (still) problematic reception of Danticat and Díaz's texts in the Dominican Republic has been alluded to in the opening section of this chapter (see note 187). Yet, bilateral initiatives such as the bilingual edition of *Le Conflit haïtiano dominicain dans la littérature caribéenne*, published in Haiti by C3 éditions and co-funded by several parties,

[259] Friedrich Schleiermacher, 'On the Different Methods of Translating', in *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, ed. by Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 36–54 (p. 42).
[260] Rodríguez, *Haiti and Trans-Caribbean Literary Identity/Haití y la transcaribeñidad literaria*, p. 184.

including a Dominican firm, [261] should be stressed as a communal effort to (re)inscribe the border conflict within a larger, pan-Caribbean literary heritage. The book thus focuses on seven different texts that have all contributed to enriching the region's literary landscape, beyond linguistic and territorial affiliations.[262] The overt aim of Lister's work is to fill in the blanks of official discourse when it comes to the 1937 genocide, and to act as a counterweight to historical negationism:

> Les manifestations des politiques de l'oubli autour des événements de 1937 se retrouvent autant dans la pratique que dans les discours. Les cours d'histoire dominicaine, enseignés aux niveaux de l'éducation primaire, moyenne et supérieure, ne font référence au génocide qu'à travers une simple mention ou une date, et ceci dans le cas où l'on daigne y faire référence. […] Par ailleurs, quand bien même ils essaient d'apporter des points de vue et des approches critiques ou d'offrir une certaine minutie dans le traitement d'autres sujets, les manuels et les livres d'histoire dominicaine minimisent ou occultent l'extermination; leurs auteurs deviennent ainsi, volontairement ou inconsciemment, les collaborateurs du discours institutionnalisé de la négation de l'holocauste.[263]

In a similar, albeit broader fashion, Fabienne Viala's monograph on the treatment of Columbus's heritage throughout the Caribbean shows, through the study of a series of commemorations and diverse cultural productions, how the myths surrounding the man who 'discovered' the Americas have turned into a transregional syndrome that continues to affect Caribbean territories in various ways.[264] Far from benefiting from an intricately woven tapestry that would help relate and read the region's various local memories together, current transnational Caribbean literary and cultural endeavours aiming at filling the 'páginas en blanco' of history continue, for the time being, to be more akin to a

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[261] In her list of acknowledgements for the publication of her book, Elissa L. Lister, mentions several Haitian institutions, among which the Haitian Embassy in the Dominican Republic, as well as the Dominican 'Compagnie de Construction Estrella'. See Elissa L. Lister, *Le Conflit haïtiano dominicain dans la littérature caribéenne* (Pétion-Ville, Haiti: C3 éditions, 2013), page unnumbered.

[262] Lister devotes a chapter to Danticat's *The Farming of Bones*, interestingly enough in its French and Spanish versions, as well as to Vega's short stories 'Encancaranublado' and 'El dia de los hechos', or again to Montero's *De rojo de su sombra*, which have all been given specific attention in this chapter.

[263] Elissa L. Lister, *Le Conflit haïtiano dominicain dans la littérature caribéenne*, pp. 20–21.

[264] Fabienne Viala, *The Post-Columbus Syndrome: Identities, Cultural Nationalism, and Commemorations in the Caribbean* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014).

mosaic, whose tesserae remain largely assembled according to partial lines of trauma recognition. For a more comprehensive patchwork to be formed, in which the sutures of the commonalities as well as of the differences marking the region still have to be made (more) apparent to heal past traumas and create, in turn, regenerative forms of mutual understanding, translation may very well have to undergo radical transformations to become truly reciprocal. Only then, it seems, could translation perform authentic acts of 'unconditional hospitality'.[265]

[265] I am following Jacques Derrida's line of thought here, developed in *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*, trans. by Rachel Bowlby (Stanford University, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), in which the philosopher explains that such unconditional forms of hospitality would entail a total relinquishing of control, in other words of ownership and (in the present case) of authorship. Also see Paola Zaccaria's point on unconditional hospitality applying to translation in 'The Art and Poetics of Translation as Hospitality', *The Conditions of Hospitality*, ed. by Thomas Claviez (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), pp. 168–184 (pp. 172–173, in particular).

4. (Re)translating Césaire's *Cahier*: towards a decolonisation of paratextual practices?

As the previous chapter on Hispaniola has shown, geographic sites of passage reveal social, cultural but also ethnic fragmentations, if not outright hostilities, in the Caribbean. Yet, when it comes to literary circulation, translation can, on the contrary, foster transnational crossings and help generate more pan-Caribbean as well as international responses to what would otherwise remain local and often territorial. In literature, the figure of Aimé Césaire is a case in point, as he is often referred to as 'Papa Césaire', particularly by authors from the region who consider themselves as his (legitimate) heirs. Césaire's work has been translated and retranslated into many languages and is fairly accessible throughout the Caribbean, although most translations have primarily been at the initiative of international, metropolitan publishers.[266] *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, which appeared in its original, serialized edition in the Paris-based, avant-garde journal *Volontés* in 1939, and which was later re-edited and republished in 1947 both by Bordas, in France, and Brentano's, in New York (in an English-French bilingual edition for the latter), was however translated into Spanish by Lydia Cabrera before then and made available to Cuban readers as early as 1943.[267] Whilst most of the translations studied in this chapter rely on the 1956 version of the poem, which is considered to be definitive as it was authorized by Césaire himself, Cabrera's translation will be taken into account, as well as A. James Arnold and Clayton Eshleman's bilingual edition, *The Original 1939 Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, because it makes a point of revealing the (long misinterpreted) authentic, original content

[266] Some local publishing incentives should however be noted, such as the 2010 edition of his play *La Tragédie du roi Christophe* translated in Martinican creole by Rodolf Etienne and published under the title *Trajédi Rwa Kristof* (CaraïbEditions). In an interview, the translator comments on his task: 'Traduire Césaire en créole et faire publier l'ouvrage est effectivement un défi. D'autant plus qu'il s'agit là de la première traduction créole de l'une des œuvres de Césaire. La rumeur a longtemps couru d'un Césaire très loin des réalités créoles. Il s'avère qu'il n'en n'est rien. *Tropiques*, par exemple, dès 1941, montre un Césaire très au fait des interrogations créoles. Cette traduction, qui avait d'ailleurs reçu son accord, est là pour prouver que sa littérature est très proche de la langue créole. Le créole habite l'œuvre de Césaire. Cette traduction a pour premier objectif d'en rendre compte.' Rodolf Etienne <http://www.montraykreyol.org/article/trajedi-rwa-kristof> [accessed 18 April 2017]

[267] Aimé Césaire, *Retorno al país natal*, trans. by Lydia Cabrera (La Habana: Molina y Cia, 1943).

of the *Cahier* to an Anglophone readership.[268] As Arnold puts it in his introduction to the volume:

> Our intention in offering the 1939 French text of the "Notebook", translated for the first time into English, is to strip away decades of rewriting that introduced an ideological purpose absent from the original. We do not claim to reveal what the poem ultimately means but rather how it was meant to be read in 1939. Reading with the poem's first audience, so to speak, will finally permit a new generation to judge its enduring power a century after the poet's birth.[269]

While it is true that the *Cahier* has often been (re)translated or (re)published in the form of scholarly editions or included in anthologies of Césaire's work where paratext sometimes constitutes more than half of the volume,[270] the poem has also been translated without endnotes or glossaries, as the example of Cabrera's translation attests to, yet rarely (if ever) without a preamble of some sort. In fact, the *Cahier* is well known for several of its prefaces, not least for André Breton's 'Un grand poète noir' which opened the 1947 Brentano's edition and was later appended as a postface to the 1983 re-edition of the poem by Présence Africaine. It is also famous for Petar Guberina's introduction and blurb on the back cover of the 1956 revised edition, also published by Présence Africaine. It should further be noted that the 1943 Cuban translation does include some additional paratextual elements to its preface by Benjamin Péret, in the form of illustrations by Cuban artist Wifredo Lam, whose work has gradually become closely connected or *re*-connected to Césaire's poetry, and has been (re)inserted in subsequent versions of the *Cahier*.[271] Historical, cultural as well as geographical contexts cannot be

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[268] Aimé Césaire, *The Original 1939 Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, trans. and ed. by A. James Arnold and Clayton Eshleman (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2013).

[269] *Ibid*., p. xx.

[270] See, for example, Abiola Irele's edition of *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* that aims at facilitating access to the text for non-French native speakers. His edition abounds with notes and is constituted of two versions of the text in French (based on the 1956 edition) that invite two subsequent readings of the poem; the first is reproduced as a whole that should be read for the pleasure of the text, whereas the second breaks up the poem into stanzas that are followed by relatively large chunks of editorial paratext aiming at elucidating obscure references.

[271] Lilian Pestre de Almeida attributes Césaire's presence on the literary scene in Cuba to the poet's friendship with Lam: 'Wifredo Lam fera connaître le *Cahier* à Cuba. Une traduction du poème en espagnol apparaît dès 1942: elle est signée par Lydia Cabrera. D'autre part, la peinture de Lam, métis de Noir et de Chinois, semble correspondre davantage à l'imaginaire césairien. La collaboration entre les deux hommes persistera

dispensed with, it seems, when studying Césaire's poem and its (re)translations. This text has in fact been chosen for specific issues that emerge, as will be argued, at the very thresholds of the translations and editions under study and that turn liminal, paratextual spaces into contact zones that not only bring together or confront various generations of scholars, thinkers, writers, translators and readers, but also locate, stress and reveal (or hide, depending on the volumes) the situated nature of reading a 'Caribbean' text such as the *Cahier*. As such, thresholds will be shown to function as chronotopes that invite us to think translation in terms of historicity and, to a certain extent, synchronicity. They will also operate as elements that, by emphasising geographical anchoring, show that the treatment of space – both within the book proper, that is where paratext is located, and in broader, geopolitical terms, in showing which audience is being addressed – influences the modalities of reading the *Cahier* for the receiving audience. Presenting the thresholds of the text as chronotopes will allow us to reflect on the often pointed out (sometimes even criticized) perishable or defective nature of (almost)[272] any translation of a canonical work such as the *Cahier*. This, in turn, generates retranslations, suggesting that each previous version was flawed and thereby entailed a revised, corrective reading of the original, which the latest version in print claims to offer. Would this mean, then, that the act of retranslation becomes akin to an endless quest for perfection, one that remains, nonetheless, unattainable, as new translations continue to come out, the latest one canceling out former attempts rather than building on them? Or, on the contrary, can transnational, non-teleological textual genealogies that emerge from the simultaneous study of translational paratext, eventually invite a rethinking of retranslation as part of an organic process that was already present in the original?[273] The *Cahier* was selected,

longtemps.' Lilian Pestre de Almeida, *Aimé Césaire: Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2012), p. 13. See also Daniel Maximin's *Césaire & Lam: Insolites bâtisseurs* that recreates a dialogue between Césaire and Lam's works by replacing fragments of the poem and images of the painting in the mouths of *Le Cahier* and *La Jungle*. The latter 'character' observes, for example, 'à voir les lithographies posées dans l'appartement du poète au travail, il apparaît bien que la magie des formes se fait traductrice de leurs convictions partagées plus que l'idée claire et la ligne trop pensée.' Daniel Maximin, *Césaire & Lam: Insolites bâtisseurs* (Paris: HC éditions, 2011), p. 18.

[272] See examples of canonical translations, often carried out by writers.

[273] See Clive Scott's constructivist approach to literature in relation to the organic nature of any given text, whether translated or not: 'The text is a living organism, sensitive to, and accommodating of, changing readers and other texts. In order to be this living organism, it always desires to be other, to elasticate its language, to

precisely, for its original instability, as the various versions of the text that have been published, even after the authorized version by Césaire in 1956,[274] illustrate.

This specificity of the poem will be studied alongside some of the arguments developed by a relatively new field that is emerging in literary (and translation) studies, that of genetic studies, with the hope of investigating the relational, dynamic potential of retranslation. On this particular point, the chapter will attempt to show how Antoine Berman's idea of a necessary 'mise en rapport'[275] with the original for a translation to be effective, must evolve into a 'mise en Relation' (in a Glissantian sense) for the already existing and future versions of the *Cahier* (including its original(s)) to overcome ideological claims of parochial (re)appropriation and aim instead towards a decentred, reconnected and thus 'dislocated' reading of the poem. To do so, various types of editions of the *Cahier* have been chosen; they include anthologies in which the poem figures among other works by Césaire, bilingual editions of the *Cahier* itself, all of which offer a parallel reading of the poem in French and its translation (in most cases in that order), but also directly translated versions (where the French 'original', whichever version serves as 'source' text, is absent). Among those editions, the hybrid version of *Retorno al país natal* where Cabrera's translation is completed by Lourdes Arencibia's version (based on the 1956 text) offers a unique testimony to the poem's hybrid nature, as a different font colour has been used to distinguish the original translation from the later one, recreating and highlighting the various layers of creation that the *Cahier* has undergone across space and time, not just in translation but also in French.[276] Thus, the provisional, fluctuating nature of the text does not just come to characterize the translational process, but the creative phases that have marked the original as well. The first part of the chapter will be devoted to presenting paratext as a site where some original elements of the *Cahier*,

find its possible variants, its potential morphings in sound and structure.' Clive Scott, *Literary Translation and the Rediscovery of Reading* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 15.

[274] See, for example, the hybrid edition published by Fundación Sinsonte which will be further discussed in 4.2. See also A. James Arnold's 'Beyond postcolonial Césaire: Reading *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* historically', *Modern Language Studies*, 3, 44 (2008), 258–275 and more specifically p. 263 on the relative use of 'édition définitive' when it comes to the *Cahier*.

[275] Antoine Berman, *L'Épreuve de l'étranger* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), p. 16.

[276] Aimé Césaire, *Retorno al país natal*, trans. by Lydia Cabrera and Lourdes Arencibia (Zamora: Fundación Sinsonte, 2007).

deemed at times opaque, at others mistranslated (hence displaced), are brought to the fore to offer a reflection on the historicity as well as on the situated nature of translation. Here, the notions of betrayal and imperfection associated with the act of translation ('*traduttore traditore*') will be tested to shift the analysis towards a reading of retranslation as a form of rewriting or even recycling, somewhat reminiscent of the literary tradition of intertextual writing ('*traduzione*, *tradizione*'[277]). Then, the presence of cosmogonic elements in the poem (stressed in the paratext of some editions under study) will serve as a starting point to debunk the myth of a single root or origin in Césaire's poetry, both in terms of form and content. This will lead to a suggestion that the various (re)translations and (re)editions of the *Cahier* contribute to thinking of translation as a constitutive element of 'digenèse'[278], as opposed to a 're-production' of the original. Henri Meschonnic's poetics of translation, and more particularly his understanding of rhythm will be useful to show how (re)translating Césaire's poem is very much akin to an act of (decentred) transmutation, whereby the beats of the *Cahier* resonate beyond language (*la langue*) and, in turn, contribute to (re)imagining unpredictable myths of creation. In its final section, the chapter will focus on retranslation as an act of recuperation, at times close to becoming a *coup* or seizure of the text, if not altogether a form of reparation. Here, the aim will be to investigate paratext as a potential site of decolonisation for Caribbean literature, whereby retranslating Césaire becomes explicitly similar to re-appropriating his work for the region and dissociating it from previous acts of assimilation which at times have classified Césaire as a man of French letters, at others, as a 'chantre de la Négritude'. Prefaces, in particular, as well as illustrations, mostly by Wifredo Lam, will be paid close attention to, as they have played a key part in the reception of Césaire's work from the early stages of the *Cahier*'s circulation onwards. Finally, the comparative, genetic outlook adopted for the study of retranslation, more particularly in the case of

[277] Expression from Gianfranco Folena, borrowed from *Volgarizzare e tradurre* (Piccola Biblioteca Einaudi, Torino, 1991 and 1994, p. VII, quoted by Chiara Montini as follows: 'Pour le critique italien [Folena], l'adage *traduttore/traditore* (et non « *tradittore* ») devrait être remplacé par *traduzione/tradizione* (traduction/tradition). […] Considérer la traduction en tant que tradition équivaut à reconnaître qu'il n'y a pas de commencement autochtone et absolu, comme le confirment également les théories de l'intertextualité, qui voient l'influence des textes du passé dans toute écriture'. Chiara Montini, *Traduire: Genèse du choix*, ed. by C. Montini and M.-H. Paret Passos (Paris: Editions des archives contemporaines, 2016), pp. ii–iii.

[278] The term is borrowed from Édouard Glissant and will be explained in the course of section 4.2.

Césaire's poem, will allow us to investigate the potential of paratextual thresholds to paradoxically 'dis'locate and eventually 'de'colonize the text rather than try to irretrievably 're'locate it onto a particular map. Siting, as well citing other (mis)translations, editions and interpretations of the poem can then lead to disseminate thoughts and ideas on identified moots of contention and, at times, resolve them to offer a translational mode of reading that lends itself to the development of pan-Caribbean, transnational exegeses for a canonical work such as the *Cahier*.

4.1. Palimpsestic thresholds of translation: (re)siting original displacements

It has been suggested that translations perish over time, while originals endure and stand the test of time. For Antoine Berman translation is an incomplete act that necessitates subsequent versions to reach a higher level of adequate rendition of the original and, thus, reduce the number of inevitable deficiencies inherent in any act of translation. Thus, retranslating literary works emerges from a search for perfectibility and a sense of completion, what Berman calls 'accomplissement':

> La retraduction surgit de la nécessité non certes de supprimer, mais au moins de réduire la défaillance originelle. La traduction d'une œuvre est rentrée dans l'espace de la re-traduction. Cela se manifeste d'abord par une multiplicité de nouvelles traductions dont chacune, à sa manière, se confronte au problème de la défaillance (c'est actuellement le cas pour Shakespeare, de Leyris à Bonnefoy et Déprats). Parfois, dans cette multiplicité, se dégage une grande traduction qui, pour un temps, suspend la succession des retraductions ou diminue leur nécessité. Dans la grande traduction, la défaillance reste présente, mais contrebalancée par un phénomène que nous pouvons appeler, avec les traducteurs du XVI^{e} siècle, la *copia*, l'abondance. Dans la retraduction accomplie règne une abondance spécifique : richesse de la langue, extensive ou intensive, richesse du rapport à la langue de l'original, richesse textuelle, richesse signifiante, etc. De fait, la grande traduction nous impose un autre discours sur la traduction que celui, traditionnel, de la perte : le discours de l'abondance. Cette abondance surgit primordialement de la réitération que constitue la retraduction. Et autant les premières traductions sont « pauvres », marquées par le manque, autant la grande

> retraduction se place sous des formes diverses sous le signe de la profusion surabondante.[279]

In the context of the *Cahier*, the relative abundance of (re)translations of Césaire's poem, particularly in English and in Spanish, seems to corroborate Berman's claim that such acts of re-transposition seek to overcome the (supposed) flaws present in earlier translations of the poem to do justice to the original. However, when dealing with a literary piece as unstable as the *Cahier* which, in its French version alone, has been marked by successive layers of rhythmic, lexical and grammatical alterations by the author and his subsequent editors, is it relevant to view the poem as Césaire wrote it (or rather kept rewriting it), as a completed and irreversible entity? If, as this chapter will show, the original(s) is itself (are themselves) the reflection of a dynamic creative process that bears the marks of the fluctuations of time and space, taking into account the poet's own experiences across different historical periods and geographical realities (Césaire's discovery of Haiti in 1944 having left its imprint on the *Cahier*, for example), then the (re)translations of the poem cannot but echo, in turn, those inherent characteristics of instability and variation.

4.1.1. On the historicity of creation and (re)translation

As several introductions to the translations and scholarly editions of the *Cahier* show, Césaire's poem had already undergone multiple transformations from 1939 to its definitive version published in 1956. In the course of its evolution, the poem has at times been labeled a surrealist work, at others a literary manifestation of *négritude*, but also a masterpiece of French verse[280] before it was eventually (re)read as a Caribbean text. In her meticulous study of the poem, Lilian Pestre de Almeida notes, for example, the

[279] Antoine Berman, 'La retraduction comme espace de la traduction', *Palimpsestes*, 4 (1990), 1–7 (pp. 5–6).

[280] Mireille Rosello observes in her introduction to the *Notebook*: 'Some critics attribute Césaire's hermeticism to the influence of European poetry, for instance of Parnassian or Symbolist poets such as Leconte de Lisle and Verhaeren, but the imitation of nineteenth-century poetry by Martinican poets was so severely criticized by the generation of *Légitime Défense* that this interpretation is problematic.' Aimé Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, trans. by Mireille Rosello and Annie Pritchard (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1995), p. 53.

disparities between the Bordas and Brentano editions, both published in 1947, yet very different in their form and content:

> Ces deux éditions publiées la même année (1947), l'une à New York et l'autre à Paris, dans l'espace de deux mois, sont fort différentes l'une de l'autre et correspondent à deux étapes de composition du poème. Le texte de Brentano's est de loin le plus surréaliste. Le texte de Bordas présente de nombreux ajouts, mais constitue au fond un retour au plan original de l'œuvre tandis que le plan de Brentano's s'en éloignait.[281]

Similarly, in his introductory paratext aiming to help Anglophone students come to terms with the poem, Abiola Irele gives a brief outline of the historical backdrop against which the *Cahier* emerged, mentioning, for example, the complex situation of Martinique under the Vichy regime,[282] but evoking also the historicity of the poem itself:

> For while [Césaire's] revisions were no doubt intended to "firm up" the poem in terms of its expressive means and therefore have a "technical" character, an equally important consideration for him was the need to bring the work into closer relation with the evolving circumstances of its social inspiration. There is internal evidence in the work to suggest a continuing response to events that had a bearing on its theme or confirmed the social and moral preoccupations that govern its articulation.[283]

Anthologies that include the *Cahier* also tend to devote a whole introductory section to biographical comments on Césaire which, in most cases, inform the reader of the author's links with the surrealist movement (often mentioning or even citing Breton's endorsement of the poem in his preface to the text, initially published in 1947),[284] his various political and literary filiations (some focusing on European influences, whilst others more prominently stress African-American or Caribbean figures),[285] and his

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[281] Pestre de Almeida, *Aimé Césaire: Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, p. 16.

[282] Aimé Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, ed. by Abiola Irele (Ibadan, Nigeria: New Horn Press, 1994), p. xxix.

[283] *Ibid*., p. xliii.

[284] See, for example, Philippe Ollé-Laprune's introduction to the Mexican anthology of Césaire's works that echoes Breton's final words of 'Un grand poète noir' in the choice of its title, 'El poeta de la palabra hermosa como el oxígeno naciente: Aimé Césaire', trans. by V. Jaua, in Aimé Césaire, *Para leer a Aimé Césaire*, ed. by Philippe Ollé-Laprune (México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2008), pp. 9–30.

[285] In his introduction to *Cuaderno de un retorno al país natal*, Agusti Bartra recreates transnational literary filiations between Césaire, Senghor, García Lorca, Saint-John Perse and Fanon, for example. See Aimé Césaire,

relationship to language and his (revolutionary, to some) use of rhythm and images.[286] Interestingly, *Aimé Césaire: The Collected Poetry*, which contains an introduction and notes by Eshleman and Smith, briefly mentions the author's constant reappraisal of his work, noting that 'in the case of several of the collections, Césaire made extensive revisions as new editions appeared'[287]. Arencibia also indicates in a note to the translation of the poem that the initial 1939 version of the *Cahier* was later revised and augmented by the author ('edición que posteriormente fue corregida y aumentada por Aimé Césaire'[288]). The poet's time in Haiti is also evoked in several introductions to his work or studies of it, often to stress the impact that this experience has had on Césaire's writing. Pestre de Almeida attributes some of the poem's fundamental differences observed in both 1947 editions (Brentano's and Bordas) precisely to that experience in Haiti:

> Nous savons aujourd'hui, grâce au tapuscrit de Brentano's découvert dans les archives d'Ivan Goll par Alex Gil et daté de 1943, qu'entre les deux éditions parues en 1947, il y a en fait un décalage temporel d'environ quatre ans. La version Brentano's, composée à partir des lectures de textes d'anthropologues était prête dès 1943, avant le séjour du poète en Haïti ; Bordas, par contre, est écrit après ce séjour.[289]

She also stresses how the poet's brief stay in Haiti in 1945 had an impact not only on the *Cahier* and its internal structure, but also on later works, particularly in *moi, laminaire*, where she identifies traces of vodoun practices and Haitian poetic forms.[290] René Depestre, in his introduction to a 1969 Cuban edition of Césaire's poems, reproduces an interview (in Spanish) that he conducted with the Martinican writer, in

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Cuaderno de un retorno al país natal, trans. by Agustí Bartra (México, D.F.: Ediciones Era, 1969), pp. 7–20. René Depestre, on the other hand, chooses to emphasize the influence of Afro-American writers and what he calls 'los valores auténticos de la cultura occidental' (listing, among others, Rimbaud, Lautréamont, Freud, Marx, Engels, Shakespeare, Proust and Mallarmé) in his own introduction to an anthology published by Casa de las Américas. See Aimé Césaire, *Poesías*, trans. by Enrique Lihn (La Habana: Casa de las Américas, 1969), pp. vii–xxxiii (p. x).

[286] This is particularly the case of Bartra, Ollé-Laprune, Rosello or again Irele who talks, in his case, of a 'language of total performance'. See Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, ed. by Abiola Irele, p. lxvi.

[287] Aimé Césaire, *Aimé Césaire*: *The Collected Poetry*, trans. by Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith (Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 1983), p. 20.

[288] Césaire, *Retorno al país natal*, p. 11.

[289] Pestre de Almeida, *Aimé Césaire: Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, p. 31.

[290] *Ibid*., p. 14.

which the latter (re)locates *négritude* in Haiti, much in the same vein as he did in the *Cahier*:[291]

> Yo adoro la Martinica, pero es una tierra alienada, mientras que Haití representaba para mí las Antillas heroicas y también las Antillas africanas. Hago el enlace entre las Antillas y África, y Haití es la tierra más africana de todas las Antillas, es al mismo tiempo un país que tiene una historia prodigiosa, la primera epopeya negra del Nuevo Mundo ha sido escrita por los haitianos, por gentes como Toussaint Louverture, como Christophe, como Dessalines, etcétera. En Martinica se conoce muy mal a Haití. Yo soy uno de los pocos martiniqueses que conocen y aman a Haití.[292]

Here, the poet's own words reinforce Depestre's reading of the poem and underline the lack of connection between Caribbean islands, even when they have some common colonial heritage, as is the case with Haiti and Martinique. This extract also highlights the links between Haiti and Africa, which could be taken into consideration for the (re)defining of the author's progressive understanding of *négritude*, as the movement has time and again been re-appropriated by generations of scholars and critics seeking its 'true' meaning and origins in Césaire's work.[293] When tasked with the mission of carrying across the poet's voice into their own language and importing the writer's work into their own culture, how do translators then inscribe their own translations of the *Cahier* within a historical positioning that they, too, fall into? Whilst most of the translations here focus, at some point or other, on previous interpretations and classifications of the *Cahier* based on its historical and/or geographical anchoring, only a few offer self-reflective comments on the translator's own positioning. Mireille Rosello's long introduction to the Bloodaxe

[291] See stanzas 42 and 45 in particular: 'Haïti où la négritude se mit debout pour la première fois et dit qu'elle croyait à son humanité', Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, ed. by Abiola Irele, p. 10.

[292] Césaire, *Poesías*, pp. xxviii–xxix.

[293] See Arnold's introductory comments to the translation of the 1939 edition on that particular point: '*Négritude* as it is presented in the poem did not yet exist in 1939, still less was it the harbinger of any movement, as readers of the post-1956 text would have it. *Négritude* is posited in the poem as the ideal result of a dramatic transformative process that must overthrow the old behaviors (*la vieille négritude*) so that a new black humanity (negritude in its positive sense) could emerge.' Césaire, *The Original 1939 Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, p. xv.

bilingual edition of the poem is a notable exception, as she admits, after reviewing generations of previous readings of the poem:

> Our own historical positioning is part of our reaction to the *Notebook*; criticism is both indispensable, and not a reason to silence Césaire's poem by forgetting it, by forgetting to read it, by mentioning it to others, or by sharing it.[294]

As Rosello points out, she and Pritchard did not wish to erase or correct all previous, existing English versions of the *Cahier* in their translation; they were responding, or rather 'reacting' to them, suggesting comparative, translational models of reading the poem (see 4.3). On the other hand, if Eshleman and Smith's introduction to their anthology published by the University of California Press resorts to a seemingly similar discourse articulated around a dialogue with the original and subsequent interpretations of it[295], it nonetheless adopts a more aggressive stance than the Bloodaxe edition.[296] Does this mean then that each new (re)translator of the *Cahier* tasks him- or herself with the re-examination and potential condemnation, or, on the contrary, endorsement of existing (competing) versions of the poem?

4.1.2. Translational thresholds: chronotopes of retractation?

Undertaking the retranslation of Césaire's work is a task that has seldom left the translator at peace, let alone silent, judging by the paratextual material where generations of *passeurs* have expressed themselves one way or another on the subject. Whilst some have insisted on the tedious aspect of their work, adopting a somewhat introspective

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[294] Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, trans. by Mireille Rosello and Annie Pritchard, p. 13.

[295] 'In an illuminating article on translating Césaire, Gregson Davis wrote that the ideal interpreter (or translator) would be one with a profound knowledge of Caribbean history and culture, and of European literary history, ancient and modern. "Perhaps," he concludes, "a new and more accurate translation is an idea whose time has come for Caribbean studies." Our work is a response to his challenge, not a promise to live up to his lofty ideal. We have no self-delusions of perfection.' Césaire, *Aimé Césaire*: *The Collected Poetry*, pp. 27–28.

[296] 'Thus many a line in our English text might puzzle the reader whose French is sufficient to understand the most immediate meaning on the facing page but not the full substance of the sociolect. If this is preciosity in the eyes of some critics, it is not our doing, and those critics will be happier when we have altogether failed to approximate French puns. As for the translator, he often is a dead duck caught between saying less or saying as much which, mysteriously enough, tends to come out as too much. Traduttore traditore, yes. But by excess or by default?' *Ibid*., p. 27.

stance sometimes characterised by a preaching tone[297], others have tried to insert their work within a history of (re)translations of the *Cahier* in presenting their own contribution. In his prologue to *Cuaderno de un retorno al país natal*, a bilingual edition, Agustí Bartra offers a new version of the *Cahier* to Hispanophone readers and presents the text as follows:

> La patria del poeta, en su aspecto material y físico, se proyecta en imágenes de destrucción, menoscabo y ruptura, y los que la habitan están sellados por la miseria, el hambre, la lepra de la inanidad, son seres baldíos y no participantes, rodeados de miedos y de "humaredas de angustia"; y, dominándolo todo, se alza el morro pétreo, junto al mar, símbolo del propio poeta tal vez. Se vive *al final del amanecer*, cuando las estrellas están más muertas que un "balafong roto". *El retorno del poeta no es un regreso al paraíso*, porque lo que le es restituido solo le posee en función de dolor miserable.[298]

Although Bartra does not make any direct allusions to existing Spanish versions of the *Cahier* here, he subtly introduces and justifies his own translational choices, especially where one of the poem's most famous lines, 'Au bout du petit matin', is concerned. He later opts for the same 'al final del amanecer' in his translation of Césaire's leitmotiv, a choice that anchors the reading of the poem in a physical and temporal reality, which is transitory, fragile, and differs from existing as well as future versions of the passage. Cabrera had, for her part, translated the leitmotiv as 'al morir el alba', which was kept by Arencibia in her additions to the 1939 version in the Sinsonte hybrid edition[299], as well as in the Cuban anthology *Poesías* published in 1969.[300] The more recent Mexican anthology of Césaire's works published by *El Fondo de Cultura Económica* in 2008 offers yet another translation for Césaire's opening line, 'A última hora de la

[297] See, once again Eshleman and Smith's introduction: 'As we mentioned earlier, Césaire's syntax is disjointed partly in an erudite Mallarmean way, partly as the result of his often unbound lyricism. […] It is therefore extremely important not to be misled by the apparent digressions, to keep track of parallel subordinating or coordinating devices, and to make use of the very few cola provided by the author. Let us take the last ten lines of "The Wheel" as an example […]. In an attempt to make sense out of the text, the translator is forced to stretch the normal syntax beyond any standard of acceptability. But he seems to have no choice in the matter.' *Ibid*., p. 25.

[298] Césaire, *Cuaderno de un retorno al país natal*, trans. by Agustí Bartra, p. 12. Emphases mine.

[299] Césaire, *Retorno al país natal*, trans. by Lydia Cabrera and Lourdes Arencibia, p. 15 for the first occurrence.

[300] Césaire, *Poesías*, p. 3 for the first occurrence.

madrugada'[301]. It is worth noting that, in his prologue to the translation, Bartra also reflects on the title of the poem, for which he prefers the term 'retorno' to 'regreso', as did all the other translators. Yet, in her afterword to *Retorno al país natal*, which corresponds to the title originally chosen for Cabrera's translation, Arencibia voices a diverging opinion on the matter:

> Huelga decir entonces que el regreso de Césaire (no me agrada usar la palabra retorno más poética tal vez, pero menos verdadera) a su país natal cuando escribe el *Cuaderno* no alude por supuesto todavía a una experiencia presencial, no estaba describiendo ni restituyendo una realidad desde la realidad, sino evocando a su isla desde la costa dálmata, regresándoles como en un sueño a sus poseedores incluyéndose a sí mismo "con sujeción a las leyes humanas", como reza el diccionario de la Real Academia en su acepción de derecho para la palabra regreso, la posesión del beneficio "cedido" o "permutado", por no decir escamoteado, quizás sin sospechar aún que estaba anunciando la poética del reencuentro del negro americano con su identidad.[302]

Arencibia's afterword offers an interesting reflection on her own positioning as translator. Whilst aligning her translation with that of her predecessor (it can be assumed that her decision to keep 'al morir el alba' was made in an attempt to have her additional parts of the poem based on Césaire's additions published with Cabrera's preceding version), she distances herself from it as well (even if only in the afterword and in brackets). Although not the actual translator of the texts compiled in *Para leer a Aimé Césaire*, Philippe Ollé-Laprune draws a parallel between Césaire's poem with Fanon's *Los condenados de la tierra* in his introduction (more exactly Sartre's preface to Fanon's text), and, in so doing, endorses the title of 'Cuaderno de un retorno a la tierra natal'. This differs from previous translations, as 'país' is replaced by 'tierra'[303], a change which reorients the reading of Césaire's poem as it emphasises the alienation as well as the psychological domination suffered by the speaker in the poem, much in the same vein as Fanon showed in his own writing. Interestingly, although maintaining the term 'país' in his own translation of the *Cahier*, Bartra also evokes Fanon in his prologue, re-reading

[301] Césaire, *Para leer a Aimé Césaire*, p. 33 for the first occurrence.
[302] Césaire, *Retorno al país natal*, pp. 76–77.
[303] Césaire, *Para leer a Aimé Césaire*, p. 12.

Césaire's text along similar lines.[304] One might wonder whether this Fanonian reading of the poem is related to the fact that both editions originated in Mexico, albeit at different times, as Bartra's translation was originally published in 1969 and *Para leer a Aimé Césaire* came out in 2008. Further research on the reception of Fanon's work in Mexico (and, more generally, in Latin America) would have to be conducted to further elaborate on that point. Moreover, Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope, as introduced in his *Dialogic Imagination*,[305] proves a useful tool to measure the impact of paratextual matter in the (re)translations of Césaire's poem. According to Charles Forsdick, translation has to be thought in chronotopical terms where it applies to the Caribbean,[306] that is both along spatial and temporal lines. Drawing from this argument, this chapter will show that the thresholds of Caribbean literature published in translation should be studied along a similar dual axis. Thus, paratextual elements would not only take on meaning when read from a specific location, which in most cases corresponds to a geography of thought that the reader of the receptor culture can easily identify with, but also, and concomitantly, in a specific timeframe. Furthermore, thinking the thresholds of the text chronotopically invites a reflection on the impact of paratext that depends on its location in the book itself; for instance, does Breton's 'Un grand poète noir', which opened both 1947 editions of the *Cahier*, have the same resonance when relocated after the poem (see the 1983 re-edition by Présence Africaine)? Does the preface, which has now become 'postliminal',

[304] 'El tercer movimiento se inicia con la enumeración cantante de los condenados de la tierra, de los millones de seres anónimos que no han inventado la pólvora, ni la brújula, ni han domado el vapor ni la electricidad, "pero que conocen todos los rincones des país del dolor".' Césaire, *Cuaderno de un retorno al país natal*, p. 14.

[305] 'We will give the name *chronotope* (literally, "time space") to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature. […] What counts for us is the fact that it expresses the inseparability of space and time (time as the fourth dimension of space).' Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin; London: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 84.

[306] 'Reading the Caribbean as a "translation zone," a location in which – to borrow from Michael Cronin's *Translation in the Digital Age* – "translation is better understood not as suspended in the air, but as caught up in the living currents of language and cultures," reminds us, however, that translation cannot be reduced to the spatial and is perhaps best understood in terms of a chronotope. By that, I mean that there is a need to explore the multiple, multidimensional contexts (political, social, and cultural) of translation in the Caribbean, and also to investigate particular "translation moments" – such as the Haitian earthquake of January 2010 – when the translational dynamics of the region have become suddenly and starkly apparent and are configured in terms of time and space.' Charles Forsdick, 'Translation in the Caribbean, the Caribbean in translation', *Small Axe*, 48, 19 (2015), 147–162 (p. 153).

that is deferred, serve the same function as it initially did? In the same vein, does the replacement of former introductions or notes to the poem retranslated over time necessarily entail the writing over or invalidation of previous material? The following sections will attempt to demonstrate that looking at translational (as well as editorial) thresholds as chronotopes invites a dynamic reading of (re)translation that escapes teleological trappings, which Annie Brisset warned against:

> Néanmoins, avec les ethnographes et les théoriciens de la culture, on a étudié dans l'espace et dans le temps les rapports de la traduction avec des altérités intra et interculturelles. On s'est appliqué à mettre au jour ses compromissions et ses manipulations (voir la fameuse *Manipulation School* de Theo Hermans). Le paradoxe est qu'en débouchant sur la question de l'éthique, cette réflexion élargie aux dimensions du post-colonialisme a fini par réactualiser une vision de la traduction et de sa critique où cette fois la bien-pensance (le "politiquement correct") sert à fixer la forme nouvelle, la norme réparatrice, de la "bonne" (re)traduction. Ce retour du refoulé axiologique montre, s'il en était besoin, la nécessité toujours actuelle d'une contextualisation historique des jugements sur la traduction, et par conséquent des pratiques qui les rendent visibles. Si l'on veut tester la validité de certains énoncés qui demeurent pour l'instant des pétitions de principe, on doit multiplier les études de cas, mais en prenant soin de situer chaque (re)traduction dans son chronotope et dans son archive.[307]

Following on from Brisset, it seems that studying translational thresholds chronotopically as well as comparatively contributes to re-assessing previous versions of the *Cahier*. However, such re-examination does not necessarily imply discrediting, let alone erasing former translations, which would give (re)translation the sole purpose of correcting what was heretofore seen as flawed. On the contrary, examining translational thresholds allows us to (re)create a tradition of reading and interpreting Césaire which varies across time and space, lending a perennial, yet, constantly renewed meaning to the relevance of his work, whilst interrogating assertions according to which retranslating is synonymous with seeking perfection.

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[307] Annie Brisset, 'Retraduire ou le corps changeant de la connaissance sur l'historicité de la traduction', *Palimpsestes*, 15 (2004), 39–67 (pp. 40–41).

4.1.3. From 'traduttore/traditore' to 'traduzione/tradizione'

As hinted earlier, the field of genetic studies offers a rich platform for the study of (re)translation from an angle that departs from the traditional adage 'traduttore, traditore'. In *Traduire: Genèse du Choix*, a collection of essays on genetic translation studies, Chiara Montini defines genetic studies as follows:

> Cette discipline, qui hérite du structuralisme, tout en s'en détachant, se distingue de la philologie traditionnelle car elle ne vise plus à reconstituer, à travers les variantes des manuscrits, la forme la plus proche du texte publié. Pour le généticien, le produit final (le texte publié) importe moins que le travail préalable, le processus qui a permis au texte de naître, et qui représente donc sa genèse. En d'autres termes, la génétique découvre l'atelier de l'écrivain suivant les différents états du texte : la dernière version n'est qu'un état de ce travail, toujours en évolution, car, quand bien même l'auteur aurait mis le point final, l'œuvre continue à évoluer.[308]

When it comes to applying genetic research to the translator's workshop alongside that of the author's in the *Cahier*'s case, going back to the phases of creation of a published translation can entail overcoming a few stumbling blocks. One of the problems most commonly faced by the researcher is that of the paucity of archives that chronicle the translation process, although the practice of leaving behind traces and layers of translational rewriting is more frequent in authors who self-translate their work.[309] How, then, can one argue for the thresholds of the text in which the translator's voice can be heard? Where the *Cahier* is concerned, not all translators of Césaire's poem(s) offer an introspective look on the task undertaken, let alone share manuscripts of erased or crossed out scribblings that led to the official version of their work. Some translators, however, provide the reader with insightful comments on the genealogy of their work, all the more so as they include reflections on the text's most enigmatic passages or refer to existing studies of the *Cahier*, in different forms and languages, to (re)articulate the text's intricate intertextualities. This is the case of Irele's study of the poem, in which he (re)establishes

[308] Montini, *Traduire: Genèse du choix*, p. ii.

[309] See the case of Malagasy writer/(self-) translator Jean-Joseph Rabearivelo in that respect. Claire Riffard, 'Rabearivelo traducteur ou l'effet boomerang', *Études littéraires africaines*, 34 (2012), 29–41.

Caribbean filiations between Césaire and Anglophone writers from the region. Although this edition is not strictly speaking a translation of the *Cahier*, most of the notes glossing the broken up stanzas of the poem could be seen as an interpretation or even a rewriting of the text, inasmuch as the elements explained in English aim at elucidating the content of the original and, in some instances, at creating echoes with the English-speaking Caribbean.[310] More generally speaking, however, this edition of the poem recreates transnational as well as transgenerational intertextualities for the *Cahier*, as the following examples highlight:

> Césaire's attachment to the figure of Toussaint L'Ouverture is representative of its hold on the minds of other West Indian writers and intellectuals such as Edouard Glissant of Martinique and René Depestre of Haiti. It is also of interest to note Toussaint's impact on the feelings and imagination of his contemporaries in Europe, as demonstrated by the sonnet dedicated to him by the English poet William Wordsworth.'[311]

> '**une couronne de daturas**: **datura** is an extremely poisonous plant. Césaire may also have had in mind here other poisonous plants found in Martinique and known by such local names as *herbe poison*, *bois-poison* and *oregine*. The use of poison from plants on the white population is a well-attested mode of operation by the black slaves, and is used to great narrative effect by Alejo Carpentier in his historical novel *El reino de este mundo* (*The Kingdom of this World*) based on events in Haiti.[312]

It should moreover be noted that in both English bilingual editions of the *Cahier*, as well as in *The Collected Poetry of Aimé Césaire*, all translators address the problematic translation of the *nègre* and its derivatives in the poem, unlike the various Spanish translations studied in the corpus. Eshleman and Smith who focus the most on the issues they came across in undertaking the task of translating Césaire, note the following:

> Finally, the problems involved in translating the word "nègre" form a whole chapter of scholarship, one Arnold entitles "the Dialectics of Blackness." Reduced to its sketchiest form, the lexical background is as follows: before the Second World War

[310] See the example of 'éléphantiasis' for which the local name of 'big foot' is given as a term used in the Anglophone part of the region. Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, ed. by Abiola Irele, p. 57.
[311] *Ibid*., p. 74.
[312] *Ibid*., p. 84.

> the French had three words to designate individuals or things belonging to the black race. The most euphemistic was "Noir" (noun or adjective). The most derogatory was "négro." In between, on a sort of neutral and objective ground, was the word "nègre," used both as a noun and as an adjective (as in "l'art nègre"). […] For the general public, "noir" and "nègre" may well have been interchangeable, but the very civilized and complexed Antilleans considered themselves as "Noirs," the "nègres" being on that distant continent, Africa. And it is in this light that one must read Césaire's use of the word "nègre" and its derivatives "négritude," "négrillon" and "négraille": he was making up a family of words based on what he considered as the most insulting way to refer to a black. The paradox, of course, was that this implicit reckoning with the blacks' ignomity, this process of self-irony and self-denigration, was the necessary step on the path of a new self-image and spiritual rebirth. From the point of view of the translator, it is therefore important to translate "nègre" as "nigger" and its derivatives or compounds of "nègre" and "nigger" (negritude, nigger scum, little nigger, etc.).[313]

The translators, in presenting a sociological history of the terms used to describe Black people in France up until around Césaire's time, express themselves assertively, backing up their argument with a reference to Arnold's essay. Eshleman and Smith insist on the need for the reader to (re)situate him/herself in a very specific historical (as well as geographical) context of (racial) reception of the text, whereby the term *nègre* was differently connoted as it came to be decades later. Arnold takes a similar stance in his introduction to *The Original 1939 Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, claiming that '[t]o render meaningfully the dialectical process that the speaker undergoes in the third and fourth sequences of the poem we have had to use words that are not acceptable today in civil discourse in English.'[314] Following on from this Anglophone tradition of addressing the sensitive issue of translating racialized terms, Rosello adopts a slightly different approach in her introduction to the poem, focusing on a Caribbean (literary) understanding of 'nègre':

> Although the word 'nègre' is obsolete and still extremely derogatory in contemporary metropolitan France, to Caribbean authors, the word has a different tonality because it is now associated with 'Negritude', which is part and parcel of their

[313] Césaire, *Aimé Césaire*: *The Collected Poetry*, p. 27.
[314] Césaire, *The Original 1939 Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, p. xvi.

> historical cultural heritage even if a second generation of thinkers has rejected some of its universalizing and essentialist implications.[315]

Here, the emphasis is laid on a Caribbean tradition of writing rather than on the receiving audience. Furthermore, the extract insists on a Caribbean re-appropriation of the derogatory French word, for which it has generated new layers of meaning – although not unilaterally recognized, as Rosello remarks. The translator's stance in this introduction appears therefore less defensive than the one adopted by her American counterparts. It also paves the way for the general tone of Rosello's 'translator's note' located after the poem, in which she foregrounds the notion of *écart* as a principle guiding her translation of the *Cahier*, as it symbolises, in her eyes, the essence of Césaire's poetics. At the same time, she acknowledges that her choices can constitute 'an imperfect attempt [at carrying across Césaire's poem] because each one entails more or less desirable consequences'.[316] Depending on how the reader wishes to interpret this comment, whether (s)he chooses to see a genuine, or, perhaps, a more becoming sense of modesty – after all, entering translational thresholds located in the book is not quite the same as entering into the translator's more intimate, anonymous workshop, through the backdoor, as it were –, it cannot be denied that such reflections on the act of (re)translation not only advocate less normative, teleological views on the practice of carrying across literary material, but also contribute to repositioning translation as a re-enactment or re-creation rather than as yet another interpretation of a canonical text.

4.2. Translation of the *Cahier* as a (re)enactment of 'digenèse'

Several works on the *Cahier* or (re)translations/editions of the text have highlighted the progressive insertion and marked emphasis on cosmogonic elements found in the poem, starting with the 1947 editions.[317] Whilst the 1939 text opens with a

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[315] Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, p. 15.

[316] *Ibid*., p. 138.

[317] Pestre de Almeida notes: 'Absent de la version de Volontés, le récit cosmogonique que l'on vient d'explorer, apparaît successivement dans Brentano's, Bordas et Présence Africaine par ordre chronologique.' Pestre de Almeida, *Aimé Césaire: Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, p. 108.

reference to the geography of the Antilles and contains clear references to Christianity, subsequent versions of the *Cahier* modify the religious overtones of the text, at times, to erase spiritual allusions altogether. Arnold notes in the introduction to his translation that '[…] notably the visible traces of a spiritual discourse were obliterated: a "catholic love" in 1939 became "love" in the New York edition, then a "tyrannical love" in the Bordas text.'[318] Depestre also suggests that Césaire's poetry distances itself from the Biblical stories of creation, forming instead a cosmogonic view of the world:

> La poesia de Césaire es, en efecto, una poesía rebelde, una poesía anterior a la leyenda de Adán, una poesía que sale del léon y del arból, una poesía de gran cabellera negra, de tronco de palma real. Esta poesía cósmica, telúrica, ofrece el espectáculo de una sucesión de metáforas que anulan las fronteras convencionales entre los tres reinos de la naturaleza […].[319]

Césaire's *Cahier* seems to restore links between the earthly and the spiritual, bringing together the harsh realities of the Antilles depicted from the outset of the poem[320] in mythical overtones that transcend the Christian idea of paradise after death.[321] Stressing, like Césaire did before him, albeit in his own terms, the importance of the Caribbean landscape for his new cosmogony, Glissant posits that composite cultures and societies such as the Caribbean have emerged from the violent encounter between atavistic (mainly monotheist) cultures and indigenous populations. He comes up with the concept of 'digenèse' for the Caribbean and the Americas, which he attributes to the aftermath of historical events such as colonisation, rather than to a specific mythical form:

> La mise en contact de ces cultures ataviques dans les espaces de la colonisation a donné naissance par endroits à des cultures et sociétés composites, qui n'ont pas généré de Genèse (adoptant les Mythes de Création venus d'ailleurs), et cela pour la raison que

[318] Césaire, *The Original 1939 Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, p. xix.

[319] Césaire, *Poesías*, p. xiv.

[320] See, in particular, the opening stanza of the poem, as reproduced in its original version here: 'Au bout du petit matin bourgeonnant d'anses frêles les Antilles qui ont faim, les Antilles grêlées de petite vérole, les Antilles dynamitées d'alcool, échouées dans la boue de cette baie, dans la poussière de cette ville sinistrement échouées.' Césaire, *The Original 1939 Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, p. 2.

[321] In the prologue to his Spanish version of the text, Bartra observes: 'El retorno del poeta no es un regreso al paraíso, porque lo que le es restituido solo lo posee en función de dolor miserable. En realidad, lo que ha regresado es la conciencia trágica y revolucionaria del hijo pródigo.' Césaire, *Cuaderno de un retorno al país natal*, p. 12.

> leur origine ne se perd pas dans la nuit, qu'elle est évidemment d'ordre historique et non mythique. La Genèse des sociétés créoles des Amériques se fond à une autre obscurité, celle du ventre du bateau négrier. C'est ce que j'appelle une digenèse.[322]

Césaire also focuses on the hold of the slave ship in the *Cahier* as a site of uprising and possible (re)birth, particularly in the last stanzas of the poem, where opacity and purity come together and pave the way for a digenesis that has yet to dismiss its colonial ghosts of originary supremacy.[323] Yet, when applied to the practice of translation and more particularly when it comes to retranslating Césaire's *Cahier*, the concept of 'digenèse' may very well offer new insights into this Caribbean canonical text and the tools available to the translator(s) to render its unstable genesis.

4.2.1. Debunking the myth of original unity

As has been shown repeatedly, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* is not a stable text, as its numerous (re)editions in French alone attest to. Yet, when undertaking the task of translating Césaire's poem, translator and publisher traditionally have to opt for one original text from which an ensuing version comes out in yet another language. In the case of the *Cahier*, such a choice generally entails ideological framing on the part of the translator (and, often, of the publisher), who decide to situate their version within a certain tradition or school of thought. Most of the (re)translations under study have therefore at least indicated which 'set' version of the poem they chose to work from. In the appendix to their *Notebook*, more specifically in a section that they devote to 'Comments on the Translations', Arnold and Eshleman (re)emphasise their decision to use the 1939 text for their bilingual edition, whilst offering to the reader a chance to delve into a history of the translations of the *Cahier* across time, as well as space:

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[322] Édouard Glissant, *Traité du Tout-Monde* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), p. 36.

[323] See in particular the oxymoronic last verse, 'c'est là que je veux pêcher maintenant la langue maléfique de la nuit en son immobile verrition'. Irele's analysis of the line, although it acknowledges the contradictions present in 'immobile verrition' is more optimistic: 'The import of Césaire's image comes to this: the universal pulse becomes incarnated in the poet, whose turbulent progress through history leads to an encounter with the cosmic realm, his agitated existence, which has been the subject of the poem, thus comes to hold the promise of fulfilment in a higher mode of experience, of an integration into the Absolute.' Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, p. 150.

> The first English translation of Césaire's poem, *Memorandum on My Martinique*, by Abel and Goll, has never been reprinted. Émile Snyder used it as the starting point for his translation, which was published as *Return to My Native Land* in a bilingual edition published by Présence Africaine in Paris (1971) and long out of print. The Snyder translation has the peculiarity of not corresponding perfectly to the post-1956 French text on the facing page since Snyder worked from an earlier draft. In the United Kingdom there have been two translations, the first as *Return to My Native Land* by Berger and Bostock for Penguin (1969); the introduction by Masiki Kunene oriented the translation sharply toward Africa. Until publication of the Eshleman-Smith translation in 1983, the *Notebook* was read quite consistently through an Africanist political lens. In 1995 Bloodaxe Books published a bilingual edition with a translation by Annie Pritchard and Mireille Rosello. Rosello's introduction sets Césaire's poem in a postcolonial perspective.[324]

Although this extract focuses solely on English translations of the poem, Arnold and Eshleman also provide information on German, Spanish, Italian and Dutch versions of the *Cahier*, in an attempt to show that Césaire's work is available to most Caribbean readers (at least in theory, assuming that the text circulates unimpeded from its publishing centre(s) to peripheral readers based in the Caribbean).[325] The passage therefore also highlights the vagaries of the publishing industry and hints at the practical need for retranslations beyond matters of exegesis, as translations can disappear over time, especially when the original print run is low and copyright is not secured. The additional mention of concomitant, if not competing English versions of the poem, published on each side of the Atlantic, also reinforces the idea that the text acquires dual lives (hence, another form of 'di-genèse') depending on its place of birth. Be that as it may, paratextual material proves to be of high value when it comes to (re)assessing the multiple genealogies of the *Cahier*. It can help legitimize a poetics of translation based on 'digenèse', as Rosello's introductory remarks suggest: 'Poetic father, ideological father,

[324] Césaire, *The Original 1939 Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, pp. 59–60.

[325] The translators emphasize the importance of the Dutch translation of the poem: 'In 1985 the Dutch publisher In de Knipscheer, which has specialized in titles from the Netherlands Antilles, published Simon Simonse's translation in Haarlem under the title *Logboek van een Terugkeer naar Mijn Geboorteland*. This Dutch translation made Césaire's poem available in the fourth major European language of the Caribbean region.' *Ibid*., p. 60.

political father, Césaire could not escape the loaded family metaphor if he wanted to: history is trying to reduce him to one mythic original moment'.[326] In fact, her ensuing 'Translator's Note' lays emphasis on the importance of reading the *Cahier* in an archipelagic, comparative way that allows (and even privileges) the co-existence of translations that, each in their own terms, offers a constantly renewed genesis for the text:

> Comparing translations is another way of keeping frictions alive and of identifying crucial issues or areas of marginality in the *Notebook*. One potential problem is the translation of old-fashioned epithets used to refer to Black people. […] Some of the issues raised by John Berger and Anna Bostock's Penguin translation, by Emile Snyder's Présence Africaine bilingual edition, and by Clayton Eshleman's and Annette Smith's excellent 1983 *Césaire: The Collected Poetry* are mentioned in the following glossary.[327]

Perhaps, the edition which best exemplifies how translation contributes to recreating the inherent 'digenèse' of the poem is the hybrid Spanish version published by Fundación Sinsonte where Arencibia's version is superimposed onto Cabrera's. The opening page of the volume is a case in point:

> Al morir el alba…
>
> Lárgate, le dije, jeta de policía, cara de vaca, lárgate, odio a los lacayos del orden, y a los abejones de la esperanza. Lárgate malévolo « gris-gris », chinche de monaguillo. Después me volví hacia los paraísos perdidos para él y sus pariguales, más sereno que el rostro de una mujer que miente, y allá, medico por los efluvios de un pensamiento inagotado, alimentaba el viento, desataba los monstruos, y escuchaba subir del otro lado del desastre, un río de tórtolos y tréboles de la sabana que siempre llevo dentro a la altura invertida del vigésimo piso de las más insolentes casas y por precaución contra la fuerza putrefactora de los ambientes crepusculares que recorre noche y día un sagrado sol venéreo.
>
> Al morir el alba, de frágiles ensenadas retoñando, las Antillas hambrientas, las Antillas perladas de viruelas, las Antillas

[326] Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, p. 9.
[327] *Ibid*., p. 139.

> dinamitadas de alcohol, varadas en el fango de esta bahía, siniestramente fracasadas en el polvo de esta ciudad. […][328]

The successive layers of the two French variations taken into account for the Spanish translation(s) are easily distinguishable for the reader, thanks to the use of different text colours (Arencibia's version appearing in orange). As already mentioned, Arencibia's echo of Cabrera's leitmotiv 'al morir el alba' suggests a sense of filiation between the two translations, rather than an attempt to do away with the pre-existing version. This hybrid edition also adds a touch of unpredictability for the reader (informed, it should be granted, of the meaning of the dual color code thanks to a note placed before the actual translation(s)) who discovers in the space of one volume what had heretofore traditionally led to separate publications. In that regard, the Sinsonte edition could be said to perform the sense of 'digenèse' that Glissant presents in his *Traité du Tout-Monde*, as it visually translates a creolised rendering of Césaire's poem, or more explicitly stages its own 'creolization':

> La créolisation est la mise en contact de plusieurs cultures ou au moins de plusieurs éléments de cultures distinctes, dans un endroit du monde, avec pour résultante une donnée nouvelle, totalement imprévisible par rapport à la somme ou à la simple synthèse de ces éléments.[329]

In her 'Translator's Note', Rosello insists, too, on the unpredictable nature of the *Cahier*, which has led her to pursue a poetics of *écart* when dealing with the task of translating the poem.[330] As those examples attest, (re)translating Césaire's masterpiece involves uncovering the layers of 'digenèse' present in the original(s), a task that further manifests itself in the transposition of the poet's voice.

4.2.2. Transposing the beats of Césaire's maroon rhythms

No study of the *Cahier* and its (re)translations can avoid addressing the text's orality, and more specifically Césaire's use of verse and rhythm, all the more so as most

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[328] Césaire, *Retorno al país natal*, p. 15.

[329] Glissant, *Traité du Tout-Monde*, p. 37.

[330] 'The Notebook […] is anything but predictable. It is sometimes frustrating, incomprehensible, disturbing as well as moving.' Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, p. 137.

of the paratextual elements draw attention to these aspects of the poem. Arnold's introduction to *The Original 1939 Notebook*, focuses, for example, on the sporadic presence of alexandrines in the text and insists on the solemnity that this verse adds to the French, which he and Eshleman have subsequently tried to convey in their translation.[331] Abiola Irele highlights the links between orality and opacity in the French text (this time focusing on the 1956 version) and speaks of 'a language of total performance' that, at the same time, manages to remain a riddle for the reader.[332] Bartra adopts a slightly different position and quotes Césaire on his own understanding and use of rhythm, without, however, offering a reflection on his own translation strategies:

> Las palabras de este poema de Césaire, en general de toda su obra, se proyectan más en función de acto que de expresión, y por eso es tan importante en su poesía el ritmo. El mismo lo escribió en una carta a Lilyan Kesteloot: "… el ritmo, y tal vez hubiera tenido que empezar por ahí, porque el ritmo es en definitiva la emoción primera, plegaria y orden, que anuncia antes que nada su rumor. Anterior a la palabra, a la palabra a la cual llama y domeña, seduce y necesita, veo en el ritmo la *forma* del poema: mejor que la forma (palabra ambigua), es su *estructura*, su Proyecto dictante, su globalidad instintivamente captada y organizadora".[333]

If rhythm constitutes the backbone of the poem, or as Césaire himself rectifies, its inner 'structure', it seems that the translator needs to try to capture not only the essence and nuances of the text, but also, and perhaps more importantly, its beats in order to re-create the text's architecture. The poem's musicality has been foregrounded in most of the paratexts investigated and linked, more particularly, to African and Caribbean sensory

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[331] 'A remarkable characteristic of the text is Césaire's use of the French alexandrine line of verse. French prosody is arithmetically, rather than metrically, conventional. It does not rely on classical meter derived from Greek or Latin. […] In the 1939 text the interjection of an isolated alexandrine line of verse signals an important shift in focus through rhythmic modulation. Alexandrines can be found at strophes 37, 53, and 63 (twice in the second sequence and at the beginning of the third). We have attempted to approximate this effect by using a greater solemnity, more formal lexical choices, or unusual syntax in translating those lines. There is no conventional meter we can use to achieve the identical effect.' Aimé Césaire, *The Original 1939 Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, p. xii.

[332] Aimé Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, pp. lxvi–lxvii. Ollé-Laprune's introduction to the Mexican anthology devoted to Césaire shares a similar stance on the poet's use of words that not only express meaning, but above all perform as they say: 'Como se ha señalado con frecuencia, "las palabras de Césaire no describen la negritud, no la señalan […], la hacen".' Césaire, *Para leer a Aimé Césaire*, p. 22.

[333] Césaire, *Cuaderno de un retorno al país natal*, p. 12.

and bodily experiences. Ollé-Laprune comments on the musicality of the poem in the following terms:

> Esa musicalidad, original parecida a las percusiones africanas, recuerda los textos de Nicolás Guillén y de los poetas negros estadunidenses que tanto le [Césaire] gustaban. Fusión de la palabra francesa clásica y de los ritmos aportados por una áfrica distante y deseada.[334]

Similarly, the underlying presence of creole in the poem's leitmotiv 'Au bout du petit matin', which has been identified elsewhere, [335] echoes the concept of fusion evoked here. It also links up with the notion of 'digenèse', all the more so as the slave ship, which is at the centre of Glissant's theory as well as of Césaire's *Cahier*, proves to be a site of resistance to universalizing myth-making (see Glissant above) and, equally, to linguistic domination, as Césaire's (subtle) marooning of traditional French rhythm suggests. The following stanza from the *Cahier* has been commented upon by both Irele and Rosello to reveal the underlying ambiguity of the passage:

> Que 2 et 2 font 5
> Que la forêt miaule
> Que l'arbre tire les marrons du feu
> Que le ciel se lisse la barbe
> Et caetera et caetera…[336]

Whilst Rosello insists on the poet's 'cultural marooning' and re-appropriation of a French canonical reference[337] – she sees a clear allusion to La Fontaine's 'Le Singe et le chat' in those lines – Irele brings to the fore the polysemy of the term 'marron' and links it back to the Caribbean.[338] In light of those readings of the stanza, the various

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[334] Césaire, *Para leer a Aimé Césaire*, p. 25.

[335] See Pestre de Almeida, *Aimé Césaire: Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2012), p. 67.

[336] Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, p. 78.

[337] See Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, p. 54–55. In the same vein, see the prologue opening François-Achille Marbot's (Martinican) creole translation of La Fontaine's *Fables*, which itself takes the form of a poem: 'Boué tafia, marron dans bois,|Fè sócié évec quimbois (2)', Jean de la Fontaine, *Les Bambous: Fables de la Fontaine travesties en patois créole, par un vieux commandeur*, trans. by F.-A. Marbot (Fort-de-France, Martinique: Librairie de F. Thomas, 1869), p. 5. Consulted on the BnF website, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k54240030> [accessed 5 May 2017]

[338] 'a precise reference to the practice of runaway slaves who used to hide from their pursuers on treetops; *marron* was the standard word for runaway slave, giving the verb *marronner*. The reference itself is an ironic

translations of its third line open a reflection on the potential of translation not so much to uncover the ambiguity originally present in 'marron', but rather to reflect on how this choice on the part of the translator may, or not, alter the 'rhythm'[339], and some 'digenetic' components of the poem. All Spanish versions of the *Cahier* have opted for an identical translation of the line, rendered as 'que el árbol saca las castañas del fuego', which leaves out the underlying presence of marooning perceptible in the French (although that might depend on the degree of familiarity the reader has with Caribbean culture), whilst retaining the meaning of the proverb 'tirer les marrons du feu'[340]. Conversely, Eshleman and Smith have preferred to disclose the (arguably) 'concealed' meaning behind 'marrons', which they have translated as 'that the tree plucks the maroons from the fire'[341], and justified thus:

> Page 51: *marron* (maroon): from "marron", the French word for a chestnut, whence as adjective, "chestnut-colored." The secondary meaning, in the West Indies, is a fugitive black slave, or his black descendant. This meaning seems to be influenced by the American Spanish "cimarrón" (wild, unruly, or as a noun, runaway slave, maroon), based on the Old Spanish "cimarra" (brushwood), according to Webster. But the Dictionary of the Spanish Academy derives it from "cima," a mountain-top: such slaves fled to the mountains. Hence, to "maroon," to abandon (someone) on a desolate shore. In the present context, we have avoided the more idiomatic expression, "to pluck the chestnuts from the fire," because the stress is on the fugitive slave, and furthermore because this meaning is central to Césaire's poetry.

play on a French colloquial expression, equivalent to the English "pulling chestnuts out of the fire," or, "snatching victory from the jaws of defeat."' Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, p. 79.

[339] The term is borrowed from Meschonnic's works on translation and rhythm. It would be perilous to try and summarize Meschonnic's understanding of rhythm within the scope of a footnote; however, as this thesis does not rely entirely on the French thinker's philosophy of translation, the following gloss provided by his English translator remains of use: 'The way units of discourse are organized syntagmatically and paradigmatically, in both prose and poetry, to produce meaning and power of expression. Rhythm also refers to the notation of discursive elements, such as prosody, accent, consonantal or vocalic patterns and emphasis, metrical structure, syntactical structure, word order, sentence lengths and pauses.' Henri Meschonnic, *Ethics and Politics of Translating*, trans. by P.-P. Boulanger and co-ed. by H. Meschonnic (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2011), p. 172.

[340] The online version of the *Real Academia Española* offers the following definition for 'sacar las castañas del fuego': 'ejecutar en beneficio de alguien algo de lo que puede resultar daño o disgusto para sí.' <http://dle.rae.es/?id=7qVigfP> [accessed 5 May 2017]

[341] Césaire, *Aimé Césaire*: *The Collected Poetry*, p. 51.

> The word recurs in other poems, as *marronne*, *marronneur*, and as a coined verb, *marronner*.[342]

The endnote provides an interesting phrasing on the meanings that the translators attribute to 'marron'. To them, its 'secondary' signification, that of 'maroon', which they specifically locate in a Caribbean (or Hispanophone) setting, reflects their own positioning as outsiders of that culture who carry across the poem for an audience who will, most likely, not be familiar with the term, even in English (this is, once again, a bilingual edition). The translators later argue in favour of this 'secondary' meaning in their note, but only to contrast it to what they call a 'more idiomatic expression', notwithstanding the 'digenetic' ambiguity of the French, suggesting, instead, a semantic hierarchy, as if one understanding of the term had more currency than another. In contrast, it could be argued, drawing from Meschonnic's understanding of translation as a re-'enrhythmicisation'[343] of the original, that both musical sensibilities heard in the line 'Que l'arbre tire les marrons du feu' can be revealed on the thresholds of the poem, and not directly within its frame due to varying linguistic legacies (*cimárron* being distinguished from *castañas* in Spanish, for example, where the French 'marron' can be used for both signified). As Meschonnic confirms in his own words: 'le langage de la traduction n'est plus simplement la langue d'arrivée inchangée […] mais un rapport entre une langue de départ et la langue d'arrivée'[344]. In that sense, the various (re)translations of Césaire's *Cahier* (re)transpose the layers of the original, not just taking into account the words or metrics used by the poet, but above all the (musical) key in which the original and its *langage*, rather than its *langue*, were alternatively performed. In her afterword 'Aimé Césaire y su traductora Lydia Cabrera: Dos formas de asumir lo antillano', Arencibia also evokes the art of translation in musical terms, stating that the presence of the leitmotiv 'au bout du petit matin' through the poem goes further than merely lending an aesthetic touch to the poem; rather, she argues that it adds rhythm to the stanzas, in the sense that it provides the written text with its much needed corporeality in order to restore its

[342] *Ibid*., p. 402.
[343] See, once again, the gloss provided by P.-P Boulanger, the translator of *Ethics and Politics of Translating* here for a succinct definition of Meschonnic's concept: 'Enrhythmicize, to: In translation, to render the various rhythms of a text.' Henri Meschonnic, *Ethics and Politics of Translating*, p. 172.
[344] Henri Meschonnic, *Pour la Poétique*, vol. 2 (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), p. 414.

Caribbean oral/aural dimension(s).[345] Translation could then perhaps only truly become a re-enactment and an extension of the poem's 'digenèse' when it manages to (re)incorporate the different beats of the drums heard in the original(s), from as far away as the hold of the slave ship. This entails, as Glissant's definition of 'digenèse' hints at, re-invoking not simply the rhythmic flow of the sea,[346] but also the chaotic journey of the sea passage.[347] Perhaps, then, and only then can the 'vegetal cry' uttered by Césaire in his *Cahier* resonate across time and space.[348] Beyond this particular example constituting our primary case study, this section has adopted the concept of 'digenèse' to recall the need for a Caribbean perspective on translation studies, particularly where mythologies warranting a single, sacred or pure original stand fast. Looking at the original text as an organic, composite entity offers a chance to challenge the risks of limiting (re)translation to a fixed form of re-production and to embrace a view of translation as a driving force of creolization. [349]

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[345] 'Pero en la medida que *au bout du petit matin* no es solo un simple *leitmotiv* literario repetido a lo largo de la obra cumpliendo una función estética, o marcando una *poiesis*, sino que además incorpora un ritmo al poema, en mi opinión, evidencia la huella de la música presente en la poesía y consecuentemente admite extrapolarse como un préstamo del arte musical; de ahí el tratamiento recreativo e interpretativo que hace Lydia anunciando el rap y el hip hop del negro antillano de hoy.' Césaire, *Retorno al país natal*, p. 84.

[346] See Martin Munro's analysis of Meschonnic's reconceptualization of rhythm and, in particular, how he links this (to him, much needed) redefinition of rhythm to the equally urgent debunking of 'the "mythical" conception of rhythm as a sea-like entity that is fluid but fixed, contained, and bounded within the structure of the poem'. Martin Munro, *Different Drummers: Rhythm and Race in the Americas* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2010), pp. 51–52.

[347] In an interview with Thierry Clermont and Odette Casamayor for *La création*, janvier 1998, Glissant observes: 'Pour nous, Antillais, notre genèse c'est le ventre du bateau négrier. Nous n'allons pas créer un mythe fondateur puisque nous savons d'où nous venons. J'appelle ça une digenèse, c'est-à-dire une genèse qui n'entraîne pas d'absolu. C'est pour ça que les peuples des Caraïbes sont plus près de l'idée de créolisation : dès le départ, il y a l'absence. Il n'y a pas d'arrière-pays.' <http://www.regards.fr/acces-payant/archives-web/edouard-glissant,794> [accessed 6 May 2017]

[348] The expression is taken from René Depestre's introduction to the 1969 anthology of Césaire's poetry, 'Un Orfeo del Caribe': 'La poesía de Césaire es un grito vegetal. Es el grito que se oyó el día en que una selva de grandes árboles se puso de pronto a hablar francés, y en que el árbol más generoso, más viril y más sensual de esa selva se apartó bruscamente de la columna de sus camaradas y se adelantó como una antorcha negra y verde, para contarle a los hombres la historia del mundo. Ese árbol-hombre, ese hombre-árbol es el canto de Aimé Césaire.' Césaire, *Poesías*, p. xv.

[349] The notion of 'unfinished genesis' developed by Wilson Harris comes to mind here. See in particular Wilson Harris, *Selected Essays of Wilson Harris: The Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination*, intro. and ed. by A.J. M. Bundy (London: Routledge, 1999).

4.3. (Re)translating Césaire: from re*coup*eration to reparation

In his presentation of a dossier on 'Rethinking Aimé Césaire' published in *Small Axe* shortly after commemorations were held throughout the world to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the poet's birth, Eric Prieto mentions a series of local acts that he interprets as cultural and political attempts to reclaim the poet's work. To him, '[i]n each of these cases, the organizing agency manipulated Césaire's legacy, more or less subtly, to suit its own priorities.'[350] In a similar vein, this ultimate section devoted to the *Cahier* will seek to interrogate the various claims of (re)appropriation made by the translators, writers, scholars and editors who contributed to the editions that have been studied. The thresholds of the texts, from which those cultural agents express themselves and that take the form of prefatorial matter, endnotes and cover blurbs or, very specifically in the context of Césaire's poem, illustrations, will be analysed as specifically localized forms of intervention that may range from acts of more or less flagrant re*coup*eration to a practice and an understanding of (re)translation that follow reparative agendas. As has been shown throughout this chapter, Césaire's *Cahier* has experienced the vagaries of historical as well as geographical displacements in the course of its history, at times hailed as one of the founding texts of *négritude*, at others as a canonical piece of Caribbean writing. In the process, (re)translations of the poem have contributed to enriching (still ongoing) debates on the rediscovery of the 'authentic' nature of the text, but have also sparked strong criticism of what have been deemed anachronistic (re)readings of Césaire's *Ur*-text(s).[351] As André Lefevere argued, any form of translation is in fact a rewriting that necessarily entails a form of manipulation of the original.[352] In the context

[350] Eric Prieto, 'Rethinking Aimé Césaire: Presentation', *Small Axe*, 3 48, 19 (2015), 86–90 (p. 87).

[351] See for example Arnold's comments on Rosello's 'postcolonial' outlook on the text: 'Concerning the Bloodaxe editor's objection to the effect that Césaire "might alienate female readers", I can only say that this sort of political correctness, which is part and parcel of postcolonial Césaire in the North American academy, does nothing to help us understand the poem in its historical context.' A. James Arnold, 'Beyond Postcolonial Césaire: Reading *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* historically', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 3, 44 (2008), 258–275 (p. 260).

[352] 'Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society.' André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and Literary Fame*, revised edn (New York: Routledge, 2017), p. vii.

of the *Cahier*, however, it may equally be argued that the 'original' itself already consisted of an act of literary manipulation as the text's unstable genealogy and successive rewritings have proved. What seems to be questioned here, rather, is the accreditation of the person at the hands of whom the rewriting occurs. In other words, the legitimacy of the amendments carried out on the text is brought to the fore, sometimes questioned, sometimes praised, depending on the degree of authority granted to the instigator of the said changes.[353] The voices heard from the various thresholds of the *Cahier* offer a wealth of information, particularly when it comes to (re)-prefacing Césaire and his work.[354]

4.3.1. Restoring Caribbean kinships: re-prefacing Césaire

A canonical author such as Aimé Césaire needs no introduction. Or so would one deduce from his international recognition not only as a writer, but also as a political figure. Yet, most of the re-editions and (re)translations of the *Cahier*, especially when the poem has been published as part of an anthology, include prefatorial matter that presents the author and his work. Some of the retranslations (and even re-editions) of the *Cahier* make direct references to previous prefaces that have stood the test of time and acquired a fame of their own. This is the case of André Breton's 'Un grand poète noir', at times quoted in an afterword,[355] at others translated to be read as a mirror of the French (most notably in the 1971 bilingual edition by Présence Africaine) or again simply referred to, as the title of Ollé-Laprune's introduction to *Para leer a Aimé Césaire*, 'El poeta de la palabra Hermosa como el oxígeno naciente: Aimé Césaire' suggests.[356] Depestre's introduction to the anthology *Poesías* differs from those works, as his title, 'Un Orfeo del Caribe', does not refer to Breton, but makes an explicit link to another French writer whose prefaces have left an imprint in literary history, Sartre. Depestre makes an unequivocal

[353] This point will be the object of an in-depth discussion in the course of chapter 5, which focuses on self-translation.

[354] In the case of the Présence Africaine 1983 re-edition, it seems at first that only an illustration by Lam serves as an introduction. However, Breton's preface, which served as an introduction to the 1947 Bordas edition is reproduced at the end of the volume. See Aimé Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1983), pp. 77–87.

[355] See previous note.

[356] The title chosen by Ollé-Laprune is a direct reference to the last line of Breton's preface, which is later properly acknowledged as a quote from 'Un grand poète noir'. See Césaire, *Para leer a Aimé Césaire*, p. 10.

allusion to Sartre's 'Orphée Noir' – which served as a preface to Senghor's *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française* – whilst relocating Césaire's work within a Caribbean literary canon, rather than within a pan-African one. Here, Depestre cites Sartre in translation and comments upon the French philosopher's reading of the *Cahier*:

> Y es igualmente Sartre el primero en haber subrayado el carácter órfico de esta poesía al describir la operación lírica de Césaire como una «bajada a los infiernos estallantes del alma negra», semejante a la de Orfeo que baja a los infiernos a reclamarle Eurídice a Plutón. Al mismo tiempo, hay en el lirismo de Césaire una fuerza dionisiaca, un poder fálico, una fecundidad que transforma el dolor de la raza negra en una fiesta inolvidable de la palabra humana. Hay en Césaire (y es también Sartre quien lo ha mostrado por primera vez) una unidad vigorosa del dolor, del eros y de la alegría.[357]

As with Ollé-Laprune and the editors of *Présence Africaine*, Depestre situates his own introduction to Césaire's poetry within a genealogy of writers who had, in previous versions of the *Cahier*, themselves authored, and, thereby, authorized their presentations of the poem. For instance, Péret wrote a preface to Cabrera's translation of the poem when it came out in 1943 in Cuba that was later reproduced in the Sinsonte edition. In his introduction to Césaire's poem, Péret not only repositions the author as a Martinican writer, he also expresses a cry of rage against Europe:

> Tengo el honor de saludar aquí el primer gran poeta negro que ha roto las amarras y se lanza, sin preocuparse de ninguna estrella polar, de ninguna cruz del Sur intelectual, guiado únicamente por sur deseo ciego.
>
> Es maravilloso, entusiasma y reconforta altamente que en este año de 1942, (un año más de miseria y de abyección), cuando todos los poetas y artistas de Europa se ahogan asfixiados bajos los bigotes – bajo el bigote blanco de Vichy que tan bien sabe encerar las botas; el bigote en agujero de bala de Berchtesgaden, etc., - que un poeta haga oír desde América su grito único

[357] Césaire, *Poesías*, p. xvii.

> perforando la opacidad de una noche de bombas y de pelotones de ejecución.[358]

Here, the preface serves as an indictment of repressive governments, targeting specifically the Vichy regime and the artists who were complying with its ideology – or at least not expressing outright resistance to it. Péret's introduction is particularly virulent in its tone and content, but should not be viewed as a sole instance of literary framing. [359] In the case of Cuba, the role of institutions such as Casa de las Américas or La Faculdad de Letras de la Universidad de la Habana should be underlined to show how the system of patronage[360] there has aided the circulation of Francophone and Anglophone writers from the Caribbean on the island and, to a certain extent, in the wider Hispanophone the region over the years.[361] As far as the preface by Péret itself is concerned, it could be argued, as Richard Watts has done, that the paratext here lends a cultural hybridity to the poem, by restoring its Caribbean roots and acknowledging its European heritage.[362] In his own re*coup*eration of the text, Bartra re-assigns new origins to the surrealist movement, as alluded to before, re-establishing what seems to have been a heretofore silenced kinship between Césaire and García Lorca, but could also be interpreted as an attempt to shift the centre of artistic and literary creativity to the Americas and within a Hispanophone

[358] Césaire, *Retorno al país natal*, page unnumbered.

[359] 'Whether they produce translations, literary histories or their more compact spin-offs, reference works, anthologies, criticism, or editions, rewriters adapt, manipulate the originals they work with to some extent, usually to make them fit in with the dominant, or one of the dominant ideological and poetological currents of their time. Again, this may be most obvious in totalitarian societies, but different "interpretive communities" that exist in more open societies will influence the production of rewritings in similar ways.' André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and Literary Fame*, p. 6.

[360] The term is borrowed from Lefevere. See his chapter 2 'The system: patronage' in *Ibid*., pp. 11–25.

[361] See Ileana Sanz's contribution to 'Foro: Cuba traduce el Caribe' for further details. Ileana Sanz, 'Foro: Cuba traduce el Caribe', *Tusaaji: A Translation Review*, 3, 3 (2014), 88–100 (pp. 88–90).

[362] On this point, Watts writes: 'The preface, then, situates the *Cahier* in the Caribbean, but renders it relevant to the events taking place in Europe at the time. The fact remains that the mere endorsement of the text by a French Surrealist signified that the *Cahier* was participating in something relatively familiar, knowable, and proven. A preface by a figure such as Peret, with his French literary-institutional *bona fides*, renders the difference of Césaire's text recuperable and readable by a non-Caribbean audience. Nonetheless, to the cosmopolitan Latin American audience for whom this edition was destined, Lam's sketches and Peret's preface together signify the status of cultural in-betweenness, a status that the text itself evokes and attempts, on some level, to resolve.' Richard Watts, 'Translating Culture: Reading the Paratexts to Aimé Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*', *TTR: traduction, terminologie, rédaction*, 2, 13 (2000), 29–45 (p. 35).

culture.[363] Bartra acknowledges Breton and Sartre's importance in the 'making of' Césaire, but is quick to extricate the Martinican author from a strictly European literary lineage:

> Aimé Césaire fue "descubierto" por André Breton, en la Martinica, en 1941, y codificado por Sartre algunos años después. Breton incluyó al "gran poeta negro" en el grupo de sus discípulos, pero la verdad es que Césaire íba mucho más allá de la actitud de exacerbo individualismo de los surrealistas y su poesía no encajaba dentro de los moldes canónicos del irracionalismo automético.[364]

The 1942 Cuban translation of the *Cahier* is often cited as a key moment in the life of the poem, and its original preface is similarly mentioned and even quoted in some instances.[365] Unsurprisingly, when the *Cahier* was (re)translated for Caribbean audiences, the region itself was brought (back) to the fore by its various translators and the poem was constructed as a cry against colonial powers[366], whilst addressing the particular situation and treatment of Caribbean people of African-descent (in particular in Cuba and Haiti)[367]. In that sense, the prefaces and translations by Depestre, Cabrera, Arencibia, and Bartra (to some extent, as his prologue makes a strong case for Fanon) have successively contributed to the re-caribbeanization of the *Cahier*, thus adding another perspective onto the Africanist lens through which the poem has otherwise been seen, particularly in its

[363] See note 19.

[364] Césaire, *Cuaderno de un retorno al país natal*, p. 8.

[365] See Ollé-Laprune's introduction in Aimé Césaire, *Para leer a Aimé Césaire*, pp. 15–16. For a more factual reference to the Cuban edition (without mention of its paratext whatsoever), see *Aimé Césaire*: *The Collected Poetry*, p. 21.

[366] Depestre speaks of Césaire's work as of an 'implacable requisitoria que un hombre haya lanzado a la cara de los colonizadores europeos'. Césaire, *Poesías*, p. xvi.

[367] Richard Watts's article highlights this point: 'Other elements of the paratext point to the emergence of a diasporic consciousness in the Caribbean. Even the name of the translator, Lydia Cabrera, on the cover of the book reinforces this particular situating of the text. Cabrera, the Cuban ethnographer, had already done significant work on the place of Yoruba language and culture in Cuba. Conducted at a time when most Cuban intellectuals still refused to acknowledge Cuba's African heritage, Cabrera's pioneering research, like Lam's radically original drawings, helped to point the Caribbean's cultural compass at least partially away from Europe and toward Africa, all the while insisting on the Caribbean particularity of the mixture of those influences.' Watts, 'Translating Culture: Reading the Paratexts to Aimé Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*', 33–34.

English afterlives.[368] Some of the prefaces also foreground a key aspect of the text, namely its title. Most of the Spanish and English translations of the poem have retained the word 'cuaderno' or 'notebook' in their respective language; yet, some have erased the term altogether[369], somehow jettisoning a core aspect of the text, which, despite its layers of successive changes from 1939 to 1956, kept its title unchanged. The term refers not just to an anecdote according to which the poet started writing his poem in a notebook he had purchased during a visit to Croatia,[370] it suggests, as has been pointed out by Pestre de Almeida, a creative journey, and opens up a range of meanings that include the underlying tone of a demand for justice, as the expression 'cahier de doléances' implies:

> *Cahier* (du lat. *quaterni*, quatre à quatre) suppose notation sans apprêt, notes prises au fur et à mesure d'un événement ou d'un travail. *Cahier* se distingue de journal intime qui, lui, implique des notes personnelles et autobiographiques. Devant *Cahier*, le lecteur pense immédiatement à *Cahier* d'écolier, *Cahier* de dessins ou d'images ; *Cahier* des charges ; *Cahier* de doléances. D'une certaine manière, le *Cahier* césairien est tout cela à la fois. Étrange titre d'un poème que le lecteur découvrira à plusieurs égards. […] Le titre comporte encore la suggestion d'un parcours à la fois spatial et temporel. Double parcours, car celui d'un retour, successif, de toute évidence, à un départ ; il y eut donc, dans un passé encore imprécis, un déplacement initial, antérieur à l'écriture du texte, vers un ailleurs suivi d'un autre déplacement vers un ici (mais le narrateur écrit-il d'ici ?) et une révolution temporelle qui comporte le moment de partir, celui de retourner et celui d'écrire.[371]

Arencibia's afterword to the Sinsonte edition of the *Cahier* tackles this particular aspect of the text. She explains why she ultimately agreed with Cabrera's title, arguing that the term 'cuaderno' was too prosaic and 'irreverent' for a poem as emblematic as the

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[368] Arnold and Eshleman note: 'In the United Kingdom there have been two translations, the first as *Return to My Native Land* by Berger and Bostock for Penguin (1969); the introduction by Masiki Kunene oriented the translation sharply toward Africa. Until publication of the Eshleman-Smith translation in 1983, the *Notebook* was read quite consistently through an Africanist political lens.' Césaire, *The Original 1939 Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, p. 59.

[369] This is the case most notably of Cabrera's *Retorno al país natal*, later kept as such in the Sinsonte edition onto which Arencibia's translation was added, but also of Snyder's English translation of the text, *Return to My Native Land*, published in 1971 by Présence Africaine in a bilingual edition.

[370] See Arencibia's afterword in Césaire, *Retorno al país natal*, p. 76.

[371] Pestre de Almeida, *Aimé Césaire: Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, p. 64.

Cahier.[372] Regardless of the translator's stance on the choice of title for the translation (for which the publisher often has the last word anyway), it is interesting to note that Césaire's poem has remained known and referred to as the *Cahier* for generations and generations of readers in the Caribbean and throughout the world. Perhaps more telling than the presence or absence of the word itself in the various (re)translations of the poem is the (ongoing) dialogue that Césaire's words have initiated from its first Cuban translation onwards with another form of paratext that contributes to restoring the *Cahier*'s 'Caribbeanness', namely Wifredo Lam's illustrations.

4.3.2. Aimé Césaire and Wifredo Lam, 'Ils se sont [re]trouvés'[373]

Most of the retranslations and re-editions of the *Cahier* contain reproductions of Lam's illustrations to the poem that first appeared in the 1943 Molina y Cia edition. This is less so the case with the anthologies that include the poem, yet leave out Lam's illustrations, suggesting, perhaps, that his pictorial language is meant to dialogue primarily with the *Cahier* and not necessarily with the whole of Césaire's *œuvre*.[374] Most of the paratexts analysed in the editions that have served as our main case studies have highlighted the special bond between the artist and the poet,[375] if only to mention Lam's name in connection with Césaire's life history. A notable exception is Eshleman and Smith's introduction to their anthology of Césaire, in which no mention is made in writing to Lam, although various works of his, which were not originally part of Cabrera's translation, have been reproduced after each title page of the poems in the anthology. Yet,

[372] '¿Por qué ese título recto, directo, sencillamente referencial, mondo y lirondo para un proyecto fundacional? Cuaderno siempre me sonó insuficiente y hasta irreverente – en español, no menos que en francés – para una obra tan emblemática; notas, comentarios, apuntes, reflexiones, esbozos, evocación, ciertamente sugerían matices para el acercamiento, pero resultaban igualmente insatisfactorios.' Césaire, *Retorno al país natal*, p. 75.

[373] Allusion to the 2011 exhibition entitled 'Césaire, Lam, Picasso… Nous nous sommes trouvés' held at the Grand Palais, Paris.

[374] The point is highly contestable, however, as Césaire's poems dedicated to Lam in *moi, laminaire…* suggest.

[375] Pestre de Almeida insists on the role Lam played in the circulation of the *Cahier* in Cuba: 'Wifredo Lam fera connaitre le *Cahier* à Cuba. Une traduction du poème en espagnol apparaît dès 1942 : elle est signée par Lydia Cabrera. D'autre part, la peinture de Lam, métis de Noir et de Chinois, semble correspondre désormais à l'imaginaire césairien. La collaboration entre les deux hommes persistera longtemps. Le tombeau de Lam, publié dans moi, luminaire… (Seuil, 1982), est particulièrement important.' Pestre de Almeida, *Aimé Césaire: Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, p. 13.

as Frances Morris, director of the Tate Modern, has noted in her foreword to the catalogue of a 2016-2017 jointly-curated exhibition on Lam, the artist has been episodically absent from the European artistic scene, which could explain his relative invisibility in some of the editions:

> Astonishingly, though his work has been seen in group exhibitions, this is the first major solo exhibition dedicated to Lam in London since he made a selection of paintings for his own show at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in 1952. By contrast, his reputation has not diminished in Europe since his death in 1982. It was in order to rectify this relative neglect in Britain that there has long been an ambition to create a major exhibition of Lam's work for Tate Modern. When it became apparent that our colleagues at the Centre Pompidou in Paris held a similar aspiration, shared with the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Sofía in Madrid, it made absolute sense for us to join forces in a truly ambitious project.[376]

Possibly motivated by an identical reparative agenda, Arnold and Eshleman also lend pride of place to Lam's illustrations in their *Original 1939 Notebook*. The cover of their translation reproduces Lam's *#3, Sans Titre* from 1960, and re-inserts, on the title page as well as at the end of the poem, drawings signed by the artist in 1943 and that date back to the Molina y Cia edition.[377] Their choice of illustration seems all the more striking as both translators unequivocally stress their aim of restoring the 1939 text's authenticity, wishing 'to strip away decades of writing that introduced an ideological purpose absent from the original', and yet add onto the text a pictorial paratext that appeared in subsequent versions of the *Cahier*.[378] Their decision can be explained in the chronology they provide at the end of their translation, in which they (re)position Lam as one of the key cultural agents who have contributed to the circulation of the poem in Cuba and, in so doing, have restored the Caribbean origins of the text.[379] They wish to offer a parallel (or counter) reading to the 1956 *Cahier* whose paratext did not take Lam's illustrations

[376] Frances Mortis, 'Foreword', *The EY Exhibition: Wifredo Lam*, ed. by C. Davis and trans. by L. Bennett (London: Tate Publishing, 2016), pp. 7–9 (p. 7).

[377] A copy of the translation is available for consultation to researchers at the BnF ('Ejemplar No. 20 | sur 300').

[378] Césaire, *The Original 1939 Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*., p. xx.

[379] 'A reading of the "Notebook" has a galvanizing effect on Lam, who undertakes to publish a Spanish translation in Havana.' *Ibid*., p. 70.

into account and primarily targeted African readers, as suggested by the blurb on the back cover.[380] The 1969 bilingual version, translated by John Berger and Anya Bostock, opted for a detail of Picasso's 'Tête de Nègre' for its cover, also framing the poem as an African text, all the more so as it inserted a preface signed by the South African poet Mazisi Kunene in which Fanon, Cleaver and Irele are cited and the apartheid regime decried.[381] Re-introducing Lam's illustrations in subsequent (re)translations of the *Cahier* could therefore be interpreted as an alternative cultural and ideological reading of the poem that, far from obliterating its African origins, insists on the 'cultural mix so typical of the Caribbean [which] was [also] embodied and recognised in [Lam's] combination of Chinese, Congolese and Spanish heritage'[382]. When considered a visual extension of the poem that is added onto its (re)translations, the reproduction of Lam's engravings and drawings could help shift a traditional, purely ethnographic perspective on paratextual framings that consists in presenting the text as either exotic or domesticated. Instead, Lam's illustrations would then participate in an effective representation of the marooning strategies at work in the *Cahier* which have helped identify the poem as Antillean, and yet, not as a clearly identifiable Caribbean locale (Martinique may be inferred as the place described in the poem, but is not explicitly named). This is a point Rosello stresses in her 'Translator's Note':

> The absence from the *Notebook* of a conceptualised Caribbean (as opposed to a Black) identity became conspicuous whenever I had to imagine an implied Martinican or Antiguan public. In other words, every decision was implicitly based on a gamble and on a generalisation: in order to translate my experience of a poetic

[380] 'Le « Cahier d'un retour au pays natal » parut pour la première fois en 1939 dans la revue Volontés puis en 1947 chez Bordas. Une édition bilingue fut publiée à New-York chez Brentano's. Mais ces éditions sont loin d'avoir comblé les exigences du public africain. […] Toutes ces raisons (et d'autres que vous lirez dans les prochains numéros de Présence Africaine) ont amplement justifié la réédition de ce poème que l'auteur considère modestement comme une simple étape de son évolution. Alors qu'il s'agit d'une épopée de la conscience nègre qui suscite, parmi les nègres, des échos frémissants de ferveur, d'admiration et de gratitude.' Aimé Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1956).

[381] Kunene writes, for example, '[t]he colonizing whites set out not only to exploit the blacks economically, but also to reshape their reality so that they become willing slaves and willing servants. To serve the white interests as, for example, the South African apartheid system demands, must not only be the cornerstone of the blackman's reality but must constitute his fulfilment.' Aimé Césaire, *Return to My Native Land*, trans. by John Berger and Anya Bostock (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), pp. 7–8.

[382] Mortis, 'Foreword', *The EY Exhibition: Wifredo Lam*, pp. 7–9 (p. 7).

> margin, I had to invent a typical though historicised and geographically situated reader who, of course, does not exist. At the same time, keeping this margin alive was a guarantee that each reader would question the transparency of his or her own cultural and linguistic position.[383]

A similar reading has been made of Lam's series 'La Jungla', which has not been identified as typically Cuban, but rather as a symbolic space that recalls physical as well as metaphorical sites of Caribbean *marronnage*, just as Césaire's poem also invokes imaginary as well as geographical landscapes of resistance.[384] A 1995 limited re-edition of Bartra's translation of the *Cuaderno* published in Puerto Rico further attests to the importance of visual paratext in the case of Césaire's poem. In this volume, Lam's work has been replaced by engravings made by Puerto Rican printmaker and designer Consuelo Gotay, whose illustrations, black and white etchings, offer new modes or reading some of the *Cahier's* most famous lines, such as 'Al final del amanecer'.[385] Such visual re-creations or (re)translations of the poem attest to the dialogues that the text continues to initiate in the Caribbean, beyond any linguistic divides. They also exemplify the extent to which the *Cahier* may still be read and performed in Relation to other art forms, ramifying into endless rhizomes that keep on relocating the poem's stanzas onto renewed cartographies.

4.3.3. Decolonising exegesis through a translational approach to texts

This chapter will now focus on the potential of paratextual exegesis, when read cross-culturally and translationally, to deconstruct parochial readings of the *Cahier* and,

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[383] Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, p. 138.

[384] See Catherine David's 'El monte y el mundo' about Lam's work, in which she argues the following: 'Wifredo Lam was well aware that in Cuba there was no jungle but the *manigua*, a dense and thorny scrub. And the figures that stand at the fringes of his dark woodland are not inhabitants of the *manigua* – a botanical and geographical term – they live rather in the *monte*, the symbolic space an 'chronotope' that embodies the historic memory of the Cimarrones (Maroons), the Black slaves who escaped the plantations for the bush, the eternal home of the spirits and cradle of revolt.' Catherine David, 'El monte y el mundo', *The EY Exhibition: Wifredo Lam*, pp. 15–21 (p. 20).

[385] See <http://coleccionreyes-veray.com/artwork/910883_Gotay_Consuelo_538a.html> [accessed 9 May 2017]

more generally, to re-evaluate ethnographic approaches to glossaries and endnotes. Amidst the various translations of the *Cahier* under study, only a few include actual geographical representations of the Caribbean. The 1969 Penguin bilingual edition of the poem places a map of Martinique on the left-hand side of its title page, mentioning that it was 'redrawn by kind permission of the French embassy, New York'. The major points of interest of the island (main roads, cities and rivers, as well as its airport) are indicated on the map which, as its source confirms, offers a rather factual, if not geostrategic account of Martinique. At first glance, the same could be said about the maps that Rosello inserts in her introduction to the Bloodaxe edition, as they show topographical variations that indicate geological relief and, for example, or stress the geopolitical positioning of Guadeloupe, Martinique, La Réunion or Corsica toward mainland France.[386] However, as Rosello observes, her strategic placing of the three maps of Martinique both in relation (or opposition) to France and to the Caribbean seeks to deconstruct the reader's partial representations of the island (and thereby of Caribbean realities) and to address issues of identification and belonging that continue to run deep in the region.[387] By contrast, Irele's insertion of two maps, one of Guadeloupe and Martinique grouped together as 'The French West Indies' and of the Caribbean region, where the Caribbean rim interestingly 're'appears in the picture, shows a broader geographical context in connection to the poem.[388] When read comparatively these maps generate new cartographies for the reception of the *Cahier* that go beyond territorial approaches to the text. Glossary entries, when studied comparatively, further contribute to the drawing of new contours for the poem that go beyond simple ethnographic observations of Caribbean localities. In his poem, Césaire mentions the *morne* in what is commonly accepted as a description of Martinique:

> Au bout du petit matin, le morne oublié, oublieux de sauter.
>
> Au bout du petit matin, le morne au sabot inquiet et docile – son sang impaludé met en déroute le soleil de ses pouls surchauffés.

[386] Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, pp. 14–15.
[387] 'All three representations can be read as the symptom of the lack or excess of identity with which West Indians are still grappling as a result of the historical background that is specific to them.' *Ibid*., p. 16.
[388] Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, pp. vi–vii.

> Au bout du petit matin, l'incendie contenu du morne, comme un sanglot que l'on a bâillonné au bord de son éclatement sanguinaire, en quête d'une ignition qui se dérobe et se méconnaît.[389]

Some of the English and Spanish translations have retained *morne*, at times personifying the term by capitalizing it[390], at others leaving it unchanged[391]. Others have opted for a domestication of the noun into 'hill'[392], 'morro'[393] or 'Heights'[394] which erases Caribbean specificities. In the versions where the French was kept, only the English translations provide the reader with a note explaining *morne*; out of those three variations, Rosello and Pritchard's version is the only one that does not flag the entry in the text by placing an asterisk next to the term. The Eshleman/Smith and Arnold/Eshleman translations compile a series of 'notes' at the end of their respective volumes, whereas Rosello/Pritchard prefer the term 'glossary', which suggests a slightly different approach to the paratext. The material added in the two American editions provides extrinsic references to the translation that correspond to what Genette called 'crutches' in reference to foot/endnotes. Meanwhile, the glossary entries of the Bloodaxe volume invite a reading of paratext as an interlinear apparatus that offers possible glosses to some expressions encountered in the poem, yet remains discreet as the entries are not signposted as adjuncts to the text. Similarly, whilst liminal matter opening the *Cahier* is generally referred to as 'preface' or 'introduction', both 1969 editions of *Poesías* (Casa de las Américas) and *Cuaderno de un retorno al país natal* (Era) present Depestre's 'Un Orfeo del Caribe' and Bartra's untitled introduction as 'prólogos' and not as 'prefacios', as is the case with Péret's tribute to Césaire in the Sinsonte volume. Although the terms may be read interchangeably, Depestre and Bartra's introductions could be said to dialogue with the poem, not least because they both insist on the poet's voice and the orality of the

[389] Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1983), pp. 10–11.
[390] This is the case in Cabrera/Arencibia and Lihn's versions. See Césaire, *Retorno al país natal*, p. 17 and Césaire, *Poesías*, pp. 5–6.
[391] See Eshleman and Smith's translation, p. 37, Rosello and Pritchard's version, p. 35 or again Arnold and Eshleman's *Original Notebook*, pp. 5 and 7.
[392] See the 1971 bilingual edition of the poem published by Présence Africaine, p. 36.
[393] Césaire, *Para leer a Aimé Césaire*, p. 35 and Césaire, *Cuaderno de un retorno al país natal*, p. 29.
[394] Césaire, *Return to My Native Land*, p. 40.

Cahier[395], thus foregrounding the notion of discourse underlying the term 'prólogo'. Similarly, Rosello/Pritchard's glossary entry for *morne* (re)situates the noun in a cross-cultural dialogue:

> **morne**: In the West Indies, the word 'mornes' designates hills of volcanic origins. Metropolitan French people would not be familiar with the term. Symbolically, the 'morne' is linked with marooning because runaway slaves usually tried to hide there. Sometimes groups of maroons managed to establish more permanent settlements. In Caribbean literature, a paradigm exists opposing the plain, cane fields, submissiveness and the 'morne', marooning, revolt and the woods.[396]

Here *morne* is identified not only as a topographic reality of the West Indies, it is also recognized as a potent symbolic site of resistance. In addition, the Francophone reader is presented as not being necessarily familiar with the term, which indicates that a gloss may equally be valid for a native speaker of French who might feel estranged in his/her own language.[397] Conversely, the note added to the Eshleman/Smith translation focuses solely on topological, almost anatomical characteristics of the *morne*:

> the term *morne*, "used throughout the French West Indies to designate certain altitudes of volcanic origin, is justly applied to the majority of Martinican hills, and unjustly sometimes even to its mightiest elevation — Mont Pelée. Mornes usually have beautiful and curious forms: they are more often pyramidal or conoid up to a certain height, but have rounded or truncated summits. Green with the richest vegetation, they rise from valleys and coasts with remarkable abruptness." (*Two Years*, pp. 254–55.) In Césaire's time, they were often the hillocks on the outskirts of Martinican towns on which slum areas were located.[398]

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[395] Bartra speaks of Césaire's chant or 'canto […] de fraternindades' (Césaire, *Cuaderno de un retorno al país natal*, p. 20).

[396] Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, p. 144.

[397] Rosello provides a rich reflection in connection to this point in her introduction: 'This text estranges both metropolitan and Martinican readers. And it is a remarkably ironic reversal to put metropolitan French readers in a position of incompetence in front of a text which supposedly alienates the colonised. This poem subtly makes the case that linguistic 'incompetence' is a relative notion indistinguishable from the cultural.' *Ibid*., p. 56.

[398] Césaire, *Aimé Césaire*: *The Collected Poetry*, p. 401.

If the above information helps relocate the text within an identifiable Caribbean setting, it nonetheless omits to add the symbolic dimension of *marronnage* in its definition. The note provided to the reader in *The Original 1939 Notebook* adds yet another layer of explanation:

> [10] *morne*: Lafcadio Hearn, in *Two Years*…, defined the term as "used through the French West Indies to designate certain altitudes (usually with beautiful and curious forms) of volcanic origin…" Césaire connects this evocative term both with the poverty of the island and with the apocalyptic explosion that may one day bring it to an end.[399]

Here, as in the aforementioned quote, a reference is made to Lafcadio Hearn's *Two Years in the French West Indies*, which is referenced in the works cited following the notes, and presents an account of his time in Martinique, among other Caribbean islands. The reference recalls paratextual practices often encountered in travel writing, which consist in presenting and explaining to the receiving audience what may be of interest and yet unknown to them about a specific, presumably unknown location. In this example, the direct quote from Hearn adds a non-scientific, personal remark on *morne*, '(usually with beautiful and curious forms)', which manifests the relativity of notions such as norm and beauty. The endnote also incorporates an element of exegesis absent from the previous entries, suggesting an intention on the part of the author that may well be contested. Yet, when read translationally, that is, as Rosello has argued, when 'comparing translations [as] another way of keeping frictions alive and of identifying crucial issues or areas of marginality'[400], the glossaries and (end)notes provided by generations of scholars and translators invite a cross-cultural reading of the *Cahier* that not only constantly relocates the content of the poem, but also dislocates any form of fixed meaning attached to it. Once again, as translational genetic studies have started to show, the original is not an a-temporal textual entity that should ultimately be opposed to a time-bound translation, doomed to expire.[401] The *Cahier* is a case in point, as the poem

[399] Césaire, *The Original 1939 Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, p. 61.

[400] See note 62.

[401] See Elena Basile's article on Annie Brossard's *Un désert mauve* on that point: 'Le fait de montrer qu'un texte publié n'est qu'un point d'arrivée instable dans la vie d'une œuvre (peut-être même l'effet de compromis éditoriaux non visibles au public) ne peut que produire une perception plus démocratique et dynamique de

continues, in fact, to be subject to a number of contentions and (re)contextualisations. Its retranslations, when approached not as a series of individual texts that rewrite former versions, could be viewed as a non-reductive, organic mode of appreciating literature that ultimately helps erudite and lay readers alike, each at their own level, to further engage with Césaire's cry for decolonisation.

canons littéraires hérités, de leurs hiérarchies et des modalités dont la circulation dans l'espace et dans le temps des textes est toujours caractérisée par des transformations qui ne peuvent ni ne doivent être ramenées toujours et seulement à l'autorité d'un texte d'origine. Texte qui est lui-même mobile, fuyant. Assumer de creuser en profondeur la force inédite de ces conséquences épistémologiques est sans doute une tâche qui peut contribuer à une conception renouvelée du rôle de la traduction au travers de la génétique textuelle.' Elena Basile, 'Traduction comme témoignage: quelle fidélité ? Quelques considérations sur la traduction italienne du *Désert mauve*, de Nicole Brossard, in Chiara Montini, *Traduire: Genèse du choix*, C. Montini and M.-H. Paret Passos eds. (Paris: Editions des archives contemporaines, 2016), pp. 13–22 (p. 22).

5. Caribbean self-translations: relocating thresholds of (self) legitimation and transculturation

As attested in the previous chapters, notably in chapter 4, paratextual material may function as a chronotope of contextualization for a given text, to inform, familiarize but also, as it happens, estrange the readers of the receptor culture, depending on their own background and knowledge of Caribbean literature.[402] Whilst Césaire's *Cahier* and its (re)translations and (re)editions have repeatedly been accompanied by a selection of illustrations, prefaces, introductions, afterwords, glossaries and notes aimed at facilitating the reader's entry into the text, the various thresholds giving access to the poem have also served to legitimize its diverse, at times conflicting interpretations. Aiming to expand the analysis on thresholds as sites of legitimation, this chapter will focus on acts of self-translation more specifically conducted by two Puerto-Rican women writers, the late Rosario Ferré, who initially wrote in Spanish and then self-translated her works into English, and Esmeralda Santiago, who was first published (and wrote) in English and later self-translated her works into Spanish. The latter's *When I was Puerto Rican* and *Cuando era puertorriqueña* have been selected for their autobiographical nature, which will be read alongside the concept of autoethnography.[403] The aim will be to question the notion of self-representation to analyse how the text is framed differently by the author/translator when addressing metropolitan (mainland US) and peripheral (Puerto Rican and/or Hispanophone) audiences. In Santiago's case some of the questions will seek to investigate whether one version of an autobiographical account can markedly differ from its counterpart when the text has been rewritten by the author herself for another audience. If so, how do the changes that occur alter the tacit 'autobiographical pact'[404] between writer and reader? Specific attention will be paid to prefaces and introductions where both authors present themselves as dwellers of the contact zone to

[402] See Rosello's reading of the poem in French and its impact on metropolitan readers who might not be familiar with overseas territories and their linguistic, topographic or cultural realities (see note 132).
[403] As developed by Mary Louise Pratt in 'Arts of the Contact Zone', *Modern Language Association* (1991), 33–40 and *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).
[404] The expression is borrowed from Philippe Lejeune. To him, there is a tacit agreement between the writer and the reader, whereby the reader accepts that what the author is writing mirrors what happened in his or her life. See *Le pacte autobiographique* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), p. 44 in particular.

justify the bifocal lens through which they introduce their work. The split, bicultural 'selves' that Ferré and Santiago identify with will be linked to their own personal experiences of Puerto Rican bifocality,[405] which, despite some commonalities, manifest themselves differently in the strategies deployed by each writer. The act of translating one's own work will be read as a creative expression of transfusion that interrogates the concepts of Caribbean rootedness and cultural specificity on the one hand, and possible strategies of hybridity and transculturation, on the other, to present self-translation as a constitutive element of the dual frame of reference that Caribbeanness, and, more specifically Puerto Ricanness entail. Officially declared a free-associated state of the United States ('estado libre asociado'), Puerto Rico has been compared to the French Caribbean overseas departments of Guadeloupe and Martinique, but has also been described as a 'postcolonial colony'[406], which raises, among other concerns, the issue of the island's political status and the repercussions this has on the population's sense of belonging and/or uprooting. [407] In this chapter, thresholds will therefore be presented as sites that are invested by Puerto Rican writers in order to foreground the complex nature of their cultural and national sense of identity. As will be argued, the act of self-translation, at least where Ferré and Santiago are concerned, allows these writers to present their homeland as a liminal space of cultural and linguistic intersections, where familiarity and strangeness cohabit. Figures and metaphors of contamination in particular will be studied alongside the concepts of bastardization and transculturation to illustrate how self-translation can either facilitate a writer's assimilation into a receiving literary culture or, potentially, signal his/her rejection. Here, thresholds will not only be investigated as paratextual elements used by authors/self-translators; they will also be analysed in a broader, sociological context that will allow us to then study how Caribbean literature circulates within (inter)national and regional frameworks. Ferré and Santiago's

[405] The term is borrowed from Jorge Duany and will be examined in due course.
[406] The expression has been used by Jorge Duany, who himself borrowed it from Julian Flores in 'The Rough Edges of Puerto Rican Identities: Race, Gender and Transnationalism', *Latin American Research Review*, 40, 3 (2005), p. 189.
[407] See Juan Flores's analysis of the Puerto Rican specificity: 'The Puerto Rican case is of course idiosyncratic in some important ways, perhaps most of all because of the abiding colonial relationship under which its entire migratory movement and diaspora formation have transpired. […] [P]erhaps most obviously, the U.S. citizenship status of all Puerto Ricans differentiates them from other Caribbean and Latino groups'. Juan Flores, *The Diaspora Strikes Back: Caribeño Tales of Learning and Turning* (New York, Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p. 5.

self-translations seem all the more intriguing in that sense as, although deemed US citizens, both writers have felt the need to translate their works and their 'selves' to address separately mainland and island audiences. Ultimately, this chapter will turn to the possibility of considering Caribbean writing at large as a form of (self-) translation[408] that implies a transfer of the self, inasmuch as the writers' negotiations with market expectations and (inter)national logics of transfer and literary norms bring out some of the dilemmas that can be faced with regard to language 'authenticity'[409] and cultural acceptance and/or rejection.

5.1. (Auto)ethnographies of the Caribbean self

Caribbean writers of international fame have a complex, ambivalent relationship with mass culture, which often implies having recourse to a hegemonic language, whilst attempting to represent the various locales and polyphonic cultures from which they stem. Some of those writers have at times been accused of 'self-exoticism' when 'translating' their works for non-Caribbean audiences.[410] The presence of paratextual material often added during the editing process of their works therefore takes on a crucial ethnographic and ethical dimension. Here, the concept of autoethnography developed by Mary Louise Pratt needs to be introduced to further elaborate on the notion in relation to self-translation:

> Guaman Poma's *New Chronicle* is an instance of what I have proposed to call an *autoethnographic* text, by which I mean a text in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them. Thus if ethnographic texts are those in which European metropolitan subjects represent to themselves their others (usually their conquered others), autoethnographic texts are representations that the so-defined others construct *in response to* or in dialogue with those texts. Autoethnographic texts are not, then, what are usually

[408] A graphic distinction is introduced here ('self' becomes bracketed) as the final sections of the chapter not only focus on proper acts of autographic translations, but also on forms of rewriting, heterolingualism and collaborative translations.
[409] The term will be (re)defined and finetuned further on.
[410] See Celia Britton's chapter on 'Problems of Cultural Self-Representation: René Ménil, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant' on that particular point. *Language and Literary Form in French Caribbean Writing* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), pp. 27–47.

> thought of as autochthonous forms of expression or self-representation (as the Andean *quipus* were). Rather they involve a selective collaboration with and appropriation of idioms of the metropolis or the conqueror. These are merged or infiltrated to varying degrees with indigenous idioms to create self-representations intended to intervene in metropolitan modes of understanding. Autoethnographic works are often addressed to both metropolitan audiences and the speaker's own community. Their reception is thus highly indeterminate. Such texts often constitute a marginalized group's point of entry into the dominant circuits of print culture.[411]

Pratt explicitly presents autoethnography as a form of writing back, in response to a given (European) literary centre, laying particular emphasis on the subversive, deconstructive strategies that such a task requires. She is also prompt to note that the audiences targeted by such works are two-fold, which implies a form of tight-rope walking on the part of the writer/self-translator, as (s)he needs to find the appropriate balance between assimilation and manipulation of the literary rules observed in both receptor cultures, which, as will be argued, becomes all the more apparent when comparing the twin versions of a work written twice. In that regard, both Ferré and Santiago's self-translations not only help them (re)present their Puerto Rican identity differently according to the audience they address, they also offer alternative modes of autoethnographic readings that question the primacy of cultural and linguistic unity over plurality and allow them to give voice to their double perspective, whilst staging their own split selves.

5.1.1. The (split) self on display

Self-translation is sometimes set apart from allographic translation since it is commonly thought to grant more agency and thereby freedom to the translator who happens to be the author of an original text which they can render into a second language of their choice in (almost) any way they see fit. However, as will be shown, criteria of 'authenticity' apply to self-translation as well, particularly when a certain degree of plausibility is expected by the reader, as is the case with autobiographical accounts, for

[411] Pratt, 'Arts of the Contact Zone', p. 35.

example. With regard to faithfulness, Ferré goes as far as to suggest that the license with which she can alter a previous version through the act of self-translation allows her to improve the original: 'Popular lore has long equated translation with betrayal. […] But in translating one's own work it is only by betraying that one can better the original.'[412] This provocative statement stems, nonetheless, from a 'necessary reality' that Ferré has to cope with as a Puerto Rican writer, a condition she readily brings to the fore.[413] Similarly, Santiago calls attention to her own experiences as a Puerto Rican woman caught in-between three languages in her preface to the Spanish version of *When I Was Puerto Rican*:

> Cuando escribo en inglés, tengo que traducir del español que guarda mis memorias. Cuando hablo en español, tengo que traducir del inglés que define mi presente. Y cuando escribo en español, me encuentro en medio de tres idiomas, el español de mi infancia, el inglés de mi adultez, y el espanglés que cruza de un mundo a otro tal como cruzamos nosotros de nuestro barrio en Puerto Rico a las barriadas de Brooklyn.[414]

By emphasizing how she feels she must reach a third space of linguistic hybridity ('el espanglés') which entails a necessary back and forth movement between Spanish and English, as well as past and present, Santiago brings her bifocal self to the fore. Drawing on Steven Vertovec's work, Duany has defined bifocality as '[a] dual frame of reference through which expatriates constantly compare their home and host countries'[415]. In relation to Puerto Ricans, Duany adds that 'although [they are] legally domestic, they are often viewed as culturally foreign'[416]. When applied to translation, bifocality allows us to redraw the contours of original and derivative to highlight instead the porosity of those categories and show how a bilingual compositional practice actively privileges duality as a driving force of creative authenticity. Thus, self-translation participates in rendering a

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[412] Rosario Ferré, 'On Destiny, Language, and Translation, or Ophelia Adrift in the C. & O. Canal', *Voice-Overs*: *Translation and Latin American Literature*, ed. by Daniel Balderston and Marcy Schwartz (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), pp. 32–41 (p. 39).
[413] 'And yet translation, in spite of its considerable difficulties, is a necessary reality for me as a writer. As a Puerto Rican I have undergone exile as a way of life, and also as a style of life. Coming and going from south to north, from Spanish to English, without losing a sense of self can constitute an anguishing experience.' *Ibid*.
[414] Esmeralda Santiago, *Cuando era puertorriqueña* (New York: Vintage Español, 1994), p. xvii.
[415] Jorge Duany, *Blurred Borders: Translational Migration between the Hispanic Caribbean and the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), p. 2.
[416] *Ibid*., p. 103.

realistic representation of the Puerto Rican self in the works of Ferré and Santiago, inasmuch as the portrayals both authors offer to their readers reflect the variegated, at times conflicting translingual experiences they both lived. Ultimately, it could be argued that self-translation manifests alterity by putting on display a self that can only be whole when the gaps emerging from their multiple identities are exposed to the (monolingual) reader. Ferré thus hints at the conflictual relationship between Spanish and English in the Americas in the evocative title of her bilingual collection *Language Duel/Duelo del Lenguaje*, which she then develops in the title poem.[417] This dichotomy leads, in turn, to a split self for the Puerto Rican writer who navigates between the two languages as she travels back and forth from her native island to the mainland US:

A Crack in the I	La fisura del yo
On the island The mountains are darker and sharper. […] There are no barriers between your skin and its rays. They penetrate deep into the marrow. When I travel to the mainland The island becomes a lot lighter: a raft of memories a green ice floe adrift on an indigo sea. The sky is a glass bell and I'm sitting inside its perfect bubble. As I step outside, I block out the sun and walk over my own shadow lying severed on the floor.	En la isla Las montañas son más oscuras y afiladas. […] No existen fronteras entre mi piel y sus rayos. Penetran hasta el tuétano más profundo. Cuando viajo al continente la isla es mucho más liviana: una balsa de recuerdos, un témpano de hielo que deriva por el índigo del mar. El cielo es una campana de vidrio y estoy sentada al centro de su burbuja perfecta. Al salir fuera, eclipso al resplandor del sol y observo mi propia sombra desfallecida a mis pies.

Here the shadow of the self that has come asunder indicates the persona's inner split, a theme that reappears in Ferré's writing in connection with her hybrid identity as a

[417] 'Language Duel/Duelo del lenguaje', Rosario Ferré, *Language Duel/Duelo del lenguaje* (New York: Vintage, 2002), pp. 2–3.

Puerto Rican, particularly through the metaphor of the mirror.[418] The specular nature of self-translation constitutes precisely what engenders a higher degree of careful rewriting to Christian Lagarde, who points out how the second version of a text functions as a mirror that reveals the flaws present in the original:

> Alors même que l'acte traductif suppose une réécriture – pour aussi fidèle que soit la traduction –, cette version nouvelle, produite dans l'autre (une autre) langue, se révèle un miroir révélateur (à l'image de la manière dont se constitue l'identité) des éventuelles imperfections de la source, et du coup, une incitation forte à la réécriture de l'original. […] Ces allers-retours entre texte source and autotraduction peuvent aller jusqu'à former un champ de miroirs plus ou moins déformants, exigeants et ludiques à la fois, où le lecteur et leur auteur lui-même peuvent se perdre.[419]

Thus, when reading Ferré and Santiago's texts in their Spanish and English versions, it becomes clear that their literary creations are not identical copies of each other. Rather, the two variations function as separate, yet interconnected texts that refract and distort as much as they reflect each other. In keeping with Lefevere's definition of translation as a form of 'refraction'[420], this chapter would like to argue that Ferré and Santiago's self-translations correspond to cultural adaptations whereby both authors stage their bifocality in such a manner that it is deemed acceptable by their audiences, which implies linguistic, ideological but also sociocultural alterations that vary according to the reader they address. In Ferré's writing, such shifts are particularly visible in her frequent use of the first-person plural pronoun 'we' whenever she refers to Puerto Ricans or Hispanophone characters in her Spanish texts, whereas 'they' is used in her English translations to create more distance.[421] Conversely, Santiago insists on the 'rediscovery'

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[418] 'The water of the canal reminded me then of the mirror on the door of my wardrobe when I was a child, whose beveled surface entranced me when I crawled up to it because, when one looked up closely into its edge, left and right fell apart and at the same time melted into one'. Rosario Ferré, 'On Destiny, Language, and Translation; or, Ophelia Adrift in the C. & O. Canal', p. 33.

[419] Christian Lagarde, 'Avant-propos: L'autotraduction, *terra incognita* ?', *L'autotraduction aux frontières de la langue et de la culture*, ed. by Christian Lagarde and Helena Tanqueiro (Limoges: Lambert-Lucas, 2013), pp. 9–19 (pp. 11–12).

[420] '[…] refractions, the adaptation of a work of literature to a different audience, with the intention of influencing the way in which that audience reads the work – have always been with us in literature.' André Lefevere, 'Mother Courage's Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in a Theory of Literature', *The Translation Studies Reader*, 3rd ed., ed. by Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 203–219 (p. 205).

[421] See her poems 'Language Current/Corriente alterna' where she establishes a clear distinction between English and Spanish: '*Spanish* is a very different tongue. […] It goes deeper than the English Channel,|all the

of her native Spanish over time, as she had to immerse herself into an Anglophone world when she first arrived in the United States as a child: '[e]l proceso de traducir del inglés al español me forzó a aprender de nuevo el idioma de mi niñez.'[422] Unsurprisingly, their trajectories as self-translators indicate reversed compositional practices, as Ferré kept writing first in Spanish before she adapted her works into English,[423] whilst Santiago chose to write initially in English. Perhaps their choice of directionality when translating their works corresponds to their own migratory movements, whereby the former spent more time in Hispanophone countries throughout her life than the latter, who has lived primarily in the United States. After all, as Santiago points out, '[e]l idioma que más hablo es el inglés. Yo vivo en los Estados Unidos, rodeada de personas que sólo hablan en inglés, así que soy yo la que tengo que hacerme entender.'[424] Yet, even when writing in English, Santiago constantly calls attention to her Puerto Ricanness through her specific use of Spanish in her texts.

5.1.2. Breaking the 'autobiographical pact' through (self-) translation?

Initially published in 1993, *When I Was Puerto Rican* is presented by Santiago herself as the original first volume of her autobiographical works followed by her Spanish self-translation, *Cuando era puertorriqueña*, a year later.[425] In the introduction added to the Spanish version, Santiago announces her authorial intention to the reader as follows:

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way down the birth canal and beyond./*Nuestra* lengua es muy distinta. […] Va mucho más allá que el Canal de la Mancha,| casi tan hondo como el canal| por el que *llegamos* al mundo.' Rosario Ferré, *Language Duel/Duelo del lenguaje* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), pp. 6–7 (emphases mine). Ferré follows a similar strategy in the opening chapter 'Guamaní' to *Sweet Diamond Dust*/*Maldito Amor*, as the English version privileges the third-person plural 'they' to describe the people of Guamaní, whereas the Spanish original favours the first-person plural pronoun.

[422] Santiago, *Cuando era puertorriqueña*, p. xvi.

[423] This point is established by the author herself in her *Memoir*, but scholars have had different readings of Ferré's self-translations due to misleading publishing strategies that tended to obscure the author's compositional practices: 'I wrote the first version of *La casa de la laguna* in Spanish. […] After I finished the novel, I didn't want to send it to a local or to a Latin American press. I had published three works of fiction already, but my books still did not reach beyond the Latin American and Puerto Rican context. […] It occurred to me that a more effective strategy would be to publish the book first in English; this way, it would come out as an original work.' Rosario Ferré, *Memoir*, trans. by Suzanne Hintz and Benigno Trigo (Lanham: Buckwell University Press, 2016), pp. 104–105.

[424] Santiago, *Cuando era puertorriqueña*, p. xv.

[425] Santiago later wrote *Almost a Woman* (1999) and *The Turkish Lover* (2004), both translated into Spanish, although not by the author.

> La vida relatada en este libro fue vivida en español, pero fue inicialmente escrita en inglés. Muchas veces, al escribir, me sorprendí al oírme hablar en español mientras mis dedos tecleaban la misma frase en inglés. Entonces se me trataba la lengua y perdía el sentido de lo que estaba diciendo y escribiendo, como si el observar que estaba traduciendo de un idioma al otro me hiciera perder los dos.[426]

Through her statement, Santiago informs the reader that the memoir they are about to read is a translation from the English, which, in fact, bears itself the traces of a mental translating process from the Spanish. By contrast, *When I was Puerto Rican* does not contain a preface, but includes a (postliminal) note to the reader in which the author emphasizes cultural identity and her experience as a Puerto Rican woman in the United States. Santiago creates a different pact with her Anglophone reader here, as she brings to their attention the sense of uprooting she first felt during her early experiences of linguistic and cultural difference when arriving in the United States.[427] To render a sense of authenticity of her early childhood memories from her time spent between Santurce and Macún in Puerto Rico, Santiago peppers *When I was Puerto Rican* with Spanish expressions throughout the text, which, in most cases, correspond to what Inés Garcia de la Puente has identified as cultural realities specific to the Caribbean island.[428] In that sense, it could indeed be contended that the act of self-translation allows Santiago to return to the language of 'authenticity' in which she experienced the episodes related. This seems all the more in keeping with the author's agenda as the introduction to *Cuando era puertorriqueña* once again stresses this point, whilst Santiago also shares some of her

[426] Santiago, *Cuando era puertorriqueña*, p. xv.
[427] 'Yet, in the United States, my darkness, my accented speech, my frequent lapses into the confused silence between English and Spanish identified me as a foreign, non-American. In writing the book I wanted to get back to that feeling of Puertoricanness I had before I came here. Its title reflects who I was then, and asks, who am I today?' Santiago, *When I Was Puerto Rican*, p. 278.
[428] 'The frequency and cultural relevance of the Spanish words and expressions used makes *When* feel as though it is transferring into English experiences lived in the Spanish language and in the Puerto Rican culture. Spanish is used to designate *realia* non-existent in North America, like the flora, fruits, vegetables and dishes already mentioned. These, together with the expressions – often emotional exclamations – inserted in Spanish, evoke the 'authenticity' of the experience narrated. Inés Garcia de la Puente, 'Autobiography in self-translation: language towards experience in Esmeralda Santiago's *Cuando era puertorriqueña*', *The Translator*, 20, 2 (2014), 215–227 (p. 220).

linguistic concerns with her Hispanophone reader.[429] The author/self-translator expresses her preoccupations over rendering words ('palabras'), but it could as well be argued that all the examples she takes are in reality cultural references that pertain to Puerto Rico and may not even be understood by some Hispanophone readers. What matters here therefore is the question of the transferability of cultural items rather than their linguistic equivalence into English. Furthermore, when attempting to carry across abstract notions such as 'dignidad', or 'sinvergüenza' the narrator prefers to leave the terms in Spanish, as the following extracts illustrate:

> Men, I was learning, were *sinvergüenzas*, which meant they had no shame and indulged in behavior that never failed to surprise women but cause them much suffering. […]
> I started school in the middle of the hurricane season, and the world grew suddenly bigger, a vast place of other adults and children whose lives were similar, but whose shadings I couldn't really explore out of respect and *dignidad*. *Dignidad* was something you conferred on other people, and they, in turn, gave back to you. It meant you never swore at people, never showed anger in front of strangers, never stared, never stood too close to people you'd just met, never addressed people by the familiar *tú* until they gave you permission.[430]

When comparing those passages with the Spanish version, it becomes clear that what could have been identified as inter-linguistic gloss added to the main narrative to explain the terms left out in Spanish and flagged through the use of italics is in fact part of a compositional strategy that consists in transposing what Santiago experienced as a child, regardless of the language she expresses herself in. The Spanish version therefore differs very slightly from its English counterpart:

> Los hombres, estaba aprendiendo, eran todos unos sinvergüenzas, lo que quería decir que no se abochornaban de nada y que le daban rienda suelta a todos sur gustos frívolos. […]
> Las clases empezaron en el medio de los temporales, y de un día al otro mi mundo creció. Se convirtió en un lugar enorme, lleno de otros adultos y niños con vidas similares, pero de tintes

[429] 'Al escribir las escenas de mi niñez, tuve que encontrar palabras norteamericanas para expresar una experiencia puertorriqueña. ¿Cómo, por ejemplo, se dice "cohitre" en inglés: ¿o "alcapurrias"? ¿o "pitirre"? ¿Cómo puedo explicar lo que es un jíbaro? ¿Cuál palabra norteamericana tiene el mismo sentido que nuestro puertorriqueñismo, "cocotazo"?' Santiago, *Cuando era puertorriqueña*, p. xvi.
[430] Santiago, *When I Was Puerto Rican*, pp. 29–30.

> variados que yo no podía explorar por no faltar el respeto y por mantener mi dignidad. *Dignidad* era algo que tú le concedías a otras personas y que ellos te devolvían. Quería decir que nunca se maldecía a nadie, nunca se enojaba una delante de otra persona, nunca se le clavaba la vista, nunca se paraba una demasiado cerca de una persona a la que acababas de conocer, nunca se tuteaba a nadie hasta que no dieran permiso.[431]

As the text shows, both 'sinvergüenzas' and 'dignidad' are explained just as they were in English, which indicates that the strategy deployed in both versions of the memoir aim at conveying a sense of authenticity that could be interpreted as a means of recreating the young narrator's understanding of both concepts based on her early experiences of life. The argument could in turn be made that Santiago's self-translation 'back' into an 'original' Spanish does allow her to go back to the language of referentiality and experience. Yet, the performative function of her introduction added to *Cuando era puertorriqueña*, which is consistent with her bilingual autobiographical novel inasmuch as Santiago reiterates her hybridity in it,[432] reasserts her authority over the (translated) text, but does not necessarily redraft the initial, tacit pact made with the reader. As a matter of fact, in *When I Was Puerto Rican*, Santiago equally aims at reproducing a voice of herself as young Negi (the nickname her family gave her) by recalling early episodes of her life through the eyes of a child narrator. In that sense, even if the English version of the novel does not contain prefatorial matter per se that could be read as a form of binding agreement between writer and reader in which the former reasserts the 'authenticity' of the facts related to the latter, it nonetheless recreates a language that encourages the reader to adhere to the version of the narrated events. Thus, I would argue that the English version also offers a 'pragmatic [albeit tacit] agreement'[433] for the story to be read as plausible. An example taken from both versions

[431] Santiago, *Cuando era puertorriqueña*, pp. 34–35.

[432] She defines her identity as follows towards the end of her introduction: 'Mi puertorriqueñidad incluye mi vida norteamericana, mi espanglés, el sofrito que sazona mi arroz con gandules, la salsa de tomate y la salsa del Gran Combo. Una cultura ha enriquecido a la otra, y ambas me han enriquecido a mí.' *Ibid*., pp. xvii–vxiii.

[433] In reference to Philippe Lejeune, de la Puente makes the following observation: 'The identification of author, narrator and protagonist is granted by the signature on the cover of the book, according to Philippe Lejeune. This 'autobiographical pact', which is proposed by the author to the reader, 'détermine le mode de lecture du texte' (Lejeune 1975, 44). There is thus a pragmatic agreement between the writer and the reader, under the auspices of which the reader accepts that what the author has written mirrors her or his real life.' Inés Garcia de la Puente, 'Autobiography in self-translation: language towards experience in Esmeralda Santiago's *Cuando era puertorriqueña*', *The Translator*, 20, 2 (2014), 215–227 (p. 216).

comes to mind to illustrate this particular point, namely the scene in which young Esmeralda is at school and starts learning English with her Puerto Rican teacher, Miss Jiménez:

Arr ju slippin? Arr ju slippin? *Bruder John, Bruder John.* *Mornin bel sar rin ging.* *Mornin bel sar rin ging.* *Deen deen don. Deen deen don.*	*Arr yu slepin? Arr yu slepin?* *Bro der Yon, Bro der Yon.* *Mornin belsar rin gin* *Mornin belsar rin gin* *Din din don. Din din don.*
Miss Jiménez liked to teach us English through song, and we learned all our songs phonetically, having no idea of what the words meant. She tried to teach us "America the Beautiful" but had to give up when we stumbled on "for spacious skies" (4 espé chosk ¡Ay!) and "amber waves of grain" (am burr gueys of gren).	A Miss Jiménez le gustaba enseñarnos el inglés por medio de las canciones, y aprendimos todas la canciones fonéticamente, con poca idea de lo que querían decir en español. Trató de enseñarnos "America the Beautiful," pero tuvo que desistir cuando nos enredamos en "fó espechos scays" (*for spacious skies*) y "ambur ueys ofgrén" (*amber waves of grain*).

As both texts underline through their use of misspelled words and approximate phonetic transcriptions, Santiago's first experience of English relied entirely on sounds. The passage, in both languages, challenges the question of legibility for young learners, possibly making readers aware of their own linguistic shortcomings when acquiring a second language, but also foregrounds examples of accented, non-fluent English. Interestingly the sounds are transposed differently for Hispanophone and Anglophone audiences (see the parentheses), suggesting that Santiago the adult, bicultural writer is now able to refract her memories according to the reader she has in mind, adjusting her writing to their (supposed) monolingual experience. Furthermore, as the text is presented as a memoir in each case, it could as well be argued that rather than trying to ascertain which version is more authentic than the other and closer to the language of experience, *When I Was Puerto Rican* and *Cuando era puertorriqueña* both present a narrator that relates her life in hindsight, and as such can only be subjective and represent a selection of snapshots of her life. If the act of self-translation has brought back vivid, heretofore

buried memories of the linguistic environment Santiago grew up in,[434] it does not necessarily discredit the 'original' English version, despite the autobiographical nature of the novel. Privileging English as the initial language of composition (even if it was itself the result of a mental translation from the Spanish) attests to that point and poses the question of whether either autobiographical account can, in fact, be deemed as original, or if both should be seen as rewritings, in other words as (re)translations of a (his)story that is, at the end of the day, subjective and inevitably mediated.[435]

5.1.3. Thresholds of self-legitimacy

Santiago's introduction to the Spanish translation of her memoir has already been given specific attention. It should be added, however, that it bears commonalities with Ferré's preface to her English version of *Maldito amor*, *Sweet Diamond Dust*, not least because it similarly tries to obtain the reader's goodwill and, as such, functions as a *captatio benevolentiae*. Ferré presents her introduction as a 'memoir' – the title to the preface being 'Memoir of Diamond Dust' – in which she casts a retrospective glance at her original novel, much in the same vein as Santiago did when looking back on her decision to (re)translate her childhood (back) into Spanish. Ferré opens her introduction as follows: 'Now that ten years have gone by since *Sweet Diamond Dust* was published, I think I can better understand what made me write it.'[436] She later on concludes:

> *Sweet Diamond Dust*, ten years after I wrote it, speaks to me of the Puerto Rico of today. It describes the metamorphosis of the mythical "rich land" into the "dangerous port" we're living in. Change, exchange – in dollar bills or coins, in English or in

[434] Garcia De la Puente quotes a passage from both versions in which a 'four poster bed' becomes 'una cama de caoba' after the author explained that 'it was only when she translated this passage that she remembered that her mother used to proudly refer to her bed as 'la cama de caoba' ('the mahogany bed'). As a result of the re-thinking entailed in self-translating into the language of the experience, *Cuando* gets closer to details of the self-translator's childhood.' *Ibid*., p. 219.

[435] See Sara Kippur's chapter on Nancy Huston's self-translations in that regard, in which Kippur observes the following about the inevitability of translation: 'Her aesthetics of translatedness presents characters always already in translation, even before they are translated into Huston's other tongue. Self-translation, as a literary project, defamiliarizes what is already strange, providing a concrete stylistic medium for putting forth a vision of translation as endemic to modern life.' Sara Kippur, *Writing it Twice: Self-Translation and the Making of a World Literature in French* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2015), p. 45.

[436] Rosario Ferré, *Sweet Diamond Dust And Other Stories* (New York: Plume, 1996), p. vii.

> Spanish – is at the heart of the dispute for power. The novel is all gossip, lies, shameless slander – and yet the story remains true.[437]

As the passages underline, Ferré first attempts to capture the reader's attention by casting a retrospective glance on her first version of the novel in Spanish, before she ascertains the ongoing validity of her work – which is not autobiographical – by lending credence to her initial assumptions which, as she claims, are still relevant, and even 'true' a decade later. Although the first edition of *Maldito amor* did not contain a preface, the subsequent Spanish editions, from 1988 onwards, include (pre)liminal matter entitled 'Memorias de *Maldito amor*'. When compared with its English counterpart, the Spanish preface contains similar points of emphasis, particularly the parodic features of the novel which aim at debunking the 'novela de la tierra'[438], the role that Puerto Rico has played throughout time as a harbour, turning the island into a symbol of migration and constant movement,[439] or again the concluding idea that the novel 'remains true' despite the unreliability of its various intradiegetic narrators.[440] However, as has been pointed out by Gema Soledad Castillo García in her study of Ferré and her self-translations, the English preface differs from the introduction added to the Spanish editions of the novel, due to its more markedly introspective nature:

> En « Memoir », Rosario Ferré indica que el tiempo transcurrido también le ha permitido comprender mejor que lo que le motive a autotraducirse fue dar a conocer su isla a las generaciones venideras. […] Estas reflexiones personales únicamente aparecen en « Memoir » – la introducción de la novela en traducción – y parecen apuntar al hecho de que la autotraducción es, tal y como comenté en el primer capítulo, una manera de cuestionar la identidad bilingüe y bicultural de un escritor. Mediante la autotraducción, Ferré está tratando de conocerse y entenderse a sí misma.[441]

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[437] *Ibid*., p. x.

[438] '*Maldito amor* intentó ser, entre otras cosas, una parodia de la novela de la tierra.' Rosario Ferré, 'Memorias de *Maldito amor'*, *Maldito amor*, 3rd edn (San Juan: Ediciones Huracán, 1994), p. 9.

[439] 'Puerto Rico le ha dado albergue tradicionalmente a un sinfín de refugiados que han venido a tocar a sus puertas legal o ilegalmente; […] Estas inmigraciones recientes, sin embargo, le han dado a la isla un carácter de antesala o de patria transitoria, de peñón en medio del océano sobre el cual es útil apoyarse antes de "brincar el charco grande".' *Ibid*., p. 12.

[440] The last sentence of the English introduction echoes almost word for word the Spanish version: 'Todo lo que ellos cuentan es chisme, mentira, calumnia desatada, y sin embargo todo es cierto.' *Ibid*., p. 14.

[441] Gema Soledad Castillo García, *Rosario Ferré y la (auto)traducción: "(re)writing" en inglés y en español* (Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, 2013), p. 136.

As this extract shows, Ferré not only re-contextualizes *Maldito amor* for later generations of (Anglophone) readers through her act of self-translation, she also (re)asserts her hybrid identity as a Puerto Rican woman writer. To a certain extent, 'Memoir of *Sweet Diamond Dust*' therefore introduces a new pact with the reader, in which the author highlights the alterity intrinsic to her novel, bound to evolve with time while retaining its original description of Puerto Rican society. Furthermore, this new 'self-translational pact'[442] questions the relevance of classifying Puerto Rican (and, to some extent, Caribbean) literary works according to criteria of nationality and citizenship. This point seems all the more verified in the context of Puerto Rico, whose literary canon is mostly (if not entirely) regarded as 'national' when limited to writers of Spanish expression, at least on the island. Through their acts of self-translation, made visible in the very thresholds of their texts, Ferré and Santiago argue for a reconsideration and legitimation of bifocality as a driving force of Puerto Rican aesthetics that bypass lines of demarcation often drawn between diasporic writers, expressing themselves in English, and their 'home' counterparts who privilege Spanish as their language of expression. [443] Although similar phenomena can be observed in a number of Caribbean writers who similarly choose one language of expression over another depending on whether they wish to address local or metropolitan readers, the self-translational pacts observed here disrupt the concept of national literature on another level. In fact, as has been observed, if self-translation often entails being assimilated into (at least) two distinct national literary canons for writers like Julian Green or George Semprún, such dual, parallel integration does not seem to apply in the case of the Puerto Rican writer.[444] Marlene Hansen Esplin shows how Ferré's *The House on the Lagoon*, soon followed by *La Casa de la laguna*, was considered an act of treason for many Puerto Ricans, all the more so as

[442] The term refers to Alessandra Ferraro's concept of the 'pacte autotraductif', itself deriving from Lejeune's 'pacte autobiographique'. See Alessandra Ferraro, '« Traduit par l'auteur »: Sur le pacte autotraductif', *L'Autotraduction littéraire: Perspectives théoriques*, ed. by Alessandra Ferraro and Rainier Grutman (Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2016), pp. 121–140.
[443] See chapter 7 and more particularly the references to Nuyorican works (re)published by *Isla Negra Editores*.
[444] Ferraro notes: 'Par cette déclaration [qu'est le pacte autotraductif], donc, l'altérité de l'œuvre est révélée et son statut unique mis en question, ce qui souvent soulève également le problème de son appartenance à une seule littérature nationale.' Alessandra Ferraro, '« Traduit par l'auteur »: Sur le pacte autotraductif', *L'Autotraduction littéraire: Perspectives théoriques*, pp. 121–140 (p. 122).

the English publication coincided with the writer's political support of statehood (as opposed to independence) at the time.[445] Thus, despite its status as *Estado Libre Asociado* of the United States, Puerto Rico could be said to divide its literary heritage along lines of linguistic loyalties, although recent adaptations for the stage of *Cuando era puertorriqueña* and literary events on the island attest to more complex cultural realities.[446]

If some Puerto Rican writers prefer to clearly dissociate English from Spanish, and may still write in both languages, Ferré and Santiago prefer to address their 'Hamlet complex'[447] through visible acts of self-translation, navigating from one language to the other, whilst claiming their right to do so. Their authorial intentions differ, in that regard, from other self-translators who opt for a complete erasure of their multilingual experiences as writers, [448] once again asserting their identity and *auctoritas* through their position as cultural hybrids.

[445] See Marlene Hansen Esplin, 'Self-translation and Independence: Reading Between Rosario Ferré's *The House on the Lagoon* and *La casa de la laguna*', *Translation Review*, 92 (2015), 23–39 (p. 23).

[446] During my research project in Puerto Rico, I attended a stage production of *Cuando era puertorriqueña* with Puerto Rican actress Yamaris Latorre in the lead role at the Teatro Braulio Castillo in Bayamón, a suburb of San Juan. Esmeralda Santiago was moreover invited to the *Festival de la Palabra* that was held in San Juan in October 2016 and during the event her works appeared on various book stalls in both languages.

[447] The expression is borrowed from Rosario Ferré who used it in both her prefaces to *Maldito amor* and *Sweet Diamond Dust* to refer to the Puerto Rican condition: 'País esquisinfrénico con complejo de Hamlet, nuestra personalidad más profunda es el cambio, la capacidad para la transformación, para el valeroso transitar entre dos extremos o polos.' Ferré, 'Memorias de *Maldito amor'*, *Maldito amor*, p. 13.

[448] In a chapter devoted to the Argentinian writer Bianciotti, who enjoyed a prestigious literary career in France (and originally wrote in French), Kippur shows how in his case the 'bilingual project as a whole – and his engagement with autobiographical representation in particular – depend[ed] crucially on a strict separation between languages that cannot be breached by self-translation.' Kippur, *Writing it Twice: Self-Translation and the Making of a World Literature in French*, p. 102.

5.2. Trans-fusions of the Puerto-Rican bifocal self

As argued elsewhere, the concept of 'trans-fusion' is specific to Ferré and Santiago's self-translations, although it manifests itself differently in their writing.[449] As a means of introduction to the notion, suffice it to say that 'trans-fusion' refers to distinct literary productions taken from the two writers' bilingual repertoires that can be read as distinct, separate works written in different languages that nonetheless mirror and refract each other. As such, both texts could be seen as twin productions that play an equal part in the creative process, thus apparently breaking away from the model of an original giving birth to a derivative, although this should be nuanced by a detailed attention to the directionality observed by each writer in their self-translations (among other criteria developed further on). Through its graphic split, the term moreover suggests that the bifocality present in Ferré and Santiago's dual writings signals the hardships experienced by some Puerto Rican (and to a large extent, Caribbean) writers when they are strictly defined as monoglot and/or 'national'[450] individuals, as their condition is precisely to navigate between island and mainland, as well as between languages and cultures. In such a light, self-translation becomes an act of resistance against assimilation for the Caribbean writer who champions instead a right to difference and hybridity by turning manifestations of contamination into strategies of transculturation. [451]

5.2.1. Exposing contamination

In her note to the reader added to *When I was Puerto Rican*, Santiago makes the following comment about how she felt perceived by fellow Puerto Ricans upon returning to the island after a prolonged stay in the United States: 'I felt as Puerto Rican as when I left the island, but to those who had never left, I was contaminated by Americanisms, and

[449] The notion of 'trans-fusion' is taken up from a previous article on Ferré and Santiago's self-translations and from which this chapter draws. See Laëtitia Saint-Loubert, '(Ré)écritures bifocales: trans-lations et trans-fusions portoricaines dans les autotraductions de Rosario Ferré et Esmeralda Santiago', *Auteurs-traducteurs: l'entre-deux de l'écriture* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Paris Ouest, forthcoming).

[450] The term refers in particular to territories such as Puerto Rico or the French Antilles which are not independent nations.

[451] The term is borrowed from Fernando Ortiz in his *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar*.

therefore, had become less than Puerto Rican.'[452] Here, contamination indicates that the writer has lost her 'original' identity in the eyes of islanders who project onto her a certain difference. Similarly, although from a reversed angle, as she takes the United States as her point of origin, Ferré explores for her part the pitfalls of linguistic assimilation:

Tongue Less	Deslenguado
Soon you'll be an exemplary monolingual, monotone sparkling clean citizen, and all your troubles will be over. Spanish will get rusty, shrivel and fall off when you don't use it.	Pronto usted será un ciudadano ejemplar, monolingüe, monótono y resplandecientemente limpio. Sus problemas habrán tocado a su fin. El español se le marchitará, y acabará por caérsele de la lengua.

Ferré does not explicitly refer to Spanish being the mother tongue in this poem but deplores the pre-eminence of English in the United States as the prerequisite for a successful cultural integration whereby linguistic mastery means societal acceptance. It should be noted that, at first glance, the sequencing of *Language Duel/Duelo del lenguaje* seems in fact to lend pride of place to the poems composed in English, as they all appear on the left-hand side of their Spanish counterparts. However, as the title page of the collection reveals, all English texts are in fact translations from the Spanish.[453] The presence of such confounding paratext, when considered alongside the actual layout of the poems, testifies to the author's agency: through her (visible) self-translation, Ferré insists on her condition as a bifocal writer who may invert the logics of the order of composition as she wishes.[454] When focusing on Santiago's own use of language, some

[452] Santiago, *When I was Puerto Rican*, p. 278.
[453] 'Translated from the Spanish by Rosario Ferré', *Ibid.*, p. 1.
[454] It has been noted that *The House on the Lagoon* had initially been written in English and then self-translated back into Spanish (see Keja Valens, 'The Love of Neighbors, Rosario Ferré's *Eccentric Neighborhoods*/*Vecindarios excéntricos*', *Desire between Women in Caribbean Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 131–145, or Marlene Hansen Esplin, 'Self-translation and independence: Reading between Rosario Ferré's *The House on the Lagoon* and *La casa de la laguna*', *Translation Review*, 92, 1 (2015), 23–39), whilst, as a matter of fact, Ferré produced a first version of *La Casa de la laguna* in Spanish, which she then translated into English and later on rewrote in Spanish, as the original text had undergone much change in the meantime. In *Memoir*, Ferré admits that she had wanted more visibility on the global market for this novel, hence her choice to have it first published in English: 'After I finished the novel, I didn't want to send it to a local or to a Latin American press. I had published three works of fiction already,

parallels can be drawn here, particularly when she refers to her 'mancha de plátano' and advocates techniques of cross-pollination[455] to further defy binary logics of monolingual and monocultural belonging.[456] One of those strategies consists in contaminating the English language with Spanish expressions that open each of the chapters of her memoir and are followed by literal translations in English, rather than by proverbial equivalents. Santiago opens for example one of her chapters with 'Lo que no mata, engorda', which is literally rendered as 'What doesn't kill you, makes you fat' and another one, later, with 'Ahí fué donde la puerca entorchó el rabo', which becomes 'That's where the sow's tail curled', although idiomatic translations such as 'What doesn't kill you makes you stronger' or 'That's where things came to a head' could have been considered.[457] The playful effects that such literal (mis)translations produce may be likened to a form of cultural grafting or 'graft-hybrid'[458] method, whereby the reader's attention is drawn to the bicultural background of the (child) narrator, but also to the traces of her being torn apart between two worlds, which has left sutures in the text (hence the notion of 'trans-fusion'). In *Translation as Reparation*, Bandia devotes several pages to the study of proverbs used in African writing which resonate with Santiago's own practice in her memoir:

> Reproducing African proverbs in European-language fiction is a well-known writing strategy with the overall effect of tying Euro-African fiction to its oral antecedent. The use of these proverbs in Europhone writing can be said to be representational as they carry

but my books still did not reach beyond the Latin American and Puerto Rican context. […] It occurred to me that a more effective strategy would be to publish the book first in English; that way, it would come out as an original work. I thought that the distribution system of the book industry would give the novel much more exposure if it was published in the U.S. market.', Ferré, *Memoir*, p. 105.

[455] The expression is borrowed from André Brink who uses 'cross-pollination' to illustrate his own cross-over techniques when self-translating. See Cathy Maree, 'We can only manage the world once it has been storified'– Interview with André Brink', *Unisa Latin American Report* 15, 1 (1999), 41–43 (p. 43).

[456] The expression appears in several instances of *When I Was Puerto Rican*, notably in connection with episodes in which the author recalls her early years in Santurce, a neighborhood of the metro area in San Juan, after she moved from the country side and felt branded as a *jíbara* (here meant as 'country bumpkin') by her classmates. See Santiago, *When I Was Puerto Rican*, p. 39.

[457] *Ibid.*, p. 63 and p. 213 respectively.

[458] The expression is borrowed from Uwe Wirth who himself draws from the works of Darwin and Rushdie to try and establish a distinction between the concepts of grafting and hybridity, to later subvert the clear-cut boundaries established between the two notions. He observes: 'In both cases – Darwin and Rushdie – the graft-hybrid functions as the ambiguous figuration of a classificatory undecidability. It incorporates and embodies the condition of *in-between*, being subject neither to a logic of grafting nor to a logic of hybridization.' Uwe Wirth, 'Between Hybrid and Graft', *From Literature to Cultural Literacy*, ed. by Naomi Segal and Daniela Koleva (London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 232–249 (p. 245).

> across aspects of African thought and philosophy, thus resisting any attempt at assimilation by the majoritarian colonial language. […] African proverbs stand out as cultural markers in Euro-African texts, constantly reminding the reader, by its very own displacement, of its status as a translated discourse in this context of intercultural writing.[459]

If, as Bandia suggests, proverbs are necessarily culture-bound and require some form of decoding for the non-familiar reader to grasp their meaning, it could be argued that Santiago's literal renditions in *When I was Puerto Rican* maintain, on the contrary, a sense of 'remainder', whereby Puerto Rican realities are not assimilated into mainstream American culture.[460] The proverbs left out in Spanish and literally translated offer in that regard an interesting counterpoint to the glossary entries added at the end of the novel, where explanations are provided for other Spanish expressions that range from references to Puerto Rican flora and fauna to terms of endearment as the following examples illustrate:

> A otro perro con ese hueso (Ah au-troh peh-rroh cun ess-eh oo-eh-soh): Literally, another dog for that bone. Used to dismiss a story one knows to be untrue
>
> Abuela (Ah-boo-eh-lah): Grandmother
>
> Abuelo (Ah-boo-eh-loh): Grandfather
>
> Acerola (ah-ceh-ro-lah): West Indian cherry
>
> Achiote (ah-chee-oh-the): A bright orange seasoning made from annatto seeds

The mock speech patterns added in parentheses here, rather than providing a non-partisan phonetic transcription, perform an act of mimicry, whereby Spanish pronunciation is exoticised. Celia Britton and Lise Gauvin, have, among other scholars,

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[459] Paul Bandia, *Translation as Reparation*: *Writing and Translation in Postcolonial Africa* (Manchester, England; Kinderhook, New York: St Jerome Publishing, 2008), p. 74.

[460] Bandia refers to the notion in the following context: 'Proverbs are by nature dependent upon implicature as a communicative strategy. The writer as translator faces the choice of whether to repress this implicature by compensating for it in the translating language (either through footnotes or by incorporating supplementary material in the translation) or to retain the remainder, that particular aspect of the proverb which eludes assimilation or domestication by the hegemonic colonial language.' *Ibid*., p. 86.

warned against the pitfalls of auto-exoticism that some Caribbean writers (may) face, among which the proponents of the *Créolité* movement. They have been criticized for their picturesque representations of Caribbean realities, that 'consist in exploiting their status as 'insiders' to serve up an attractive and authentic – attractively authentic – version of their culture for the pleasure of outsiders'[461]. Rather than suggesting that Ferré and Santiago conform to such practices in their bifocal (re)writings, the next sections of this chapter will demonstrate how both authors have instead opted for (over) exposed forms of linguistic contamination to promote a transcultural approach to (self-) translation.

5.2.2. (Self-) translation and/as transculturation

In his seminal *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar,* Fernando Ortiz introduces the concept of *transculturación* to describe a sociological phenomenon specific to Cuba, a process born out of the violent contact of cultures in the Caribbean island which entails both the loss of an original culture (*desculturación*) and the creation of a new one (*neoculturación*)[462]. Taking up his cue, Peréz-Firmat insists on the 'collision of cultures' that underlies transculturation, whilst also highlighting its formative and transitional nature.[463] In that respect, Ferré and Santiago's rewritings, presented as acts of self-translation, provide us with compelling literary examples of transculturation. But as other studies have shown, transculturation also opens up, through its transformative phases, a third space of cultural reciprocity:

> Transculturation signifies constant interaction, transmutation between two or more cultural components, whose unconscious end is the creation of a third cultural whole – that is, culture – new and independent, although its roots rest on preceding elements. The reciprocal influence here is determining. No element is

[461] See Celia Britton's chapter on 'Problems of Cultural Self-Representation: René Ménil, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant' on that particular point. Celia Britton, *Language and Literary Form in French Caribbean Writing* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), p. 34.

[462] Fernando Ortiz, *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y el azúcar* (La Habana: Pensamiento cubano, editorial de ciencias sociales, 1983), p. 90.

[463] 'More than a comprehensive rubric for the sum or result of culture contact, transculturation is the name for the collision of cultures, for that interval between deculturation and neoculturation that defines a vernacular culture in its formative phase.', Gustavo Pérez-Firmat, *The Cuban Condition: Translation and Identity in Modern Cuban Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 23.

> superimposed on the other; on the contrary, each one becomes a third entity […][464]

A comparative approach to the two versions of Santiago's memoir, as well as of Ferré's self-translation of *Maldito amor* and its subsequent translations, notably into German, illustrates the reciprocal, cross-influential nature of transculturation underlined by West Durán. As has already been shown, *When I Was Puerto Rican* contains multiple scenes in which the young Esmeralda is confronted by cultural difference both in her native island and later on in the United States.[465] In *Cuando era puertorriqueña*, Santiago recreates an analogous sense of contact between the two cultures in which the narrator experiences difference, shifting however the angle so that the Spanish text itself undergoes a process of transculturation, particularly in episodes recalled from experiences lived in the United States. Thus, where Santiago peppered her English memoir with expressions left in Spanish, *Cuando era puertorriqueña* equally presents passages in which the narrator's incursions in broken English and 'espanglés' serve to illustrate her early memories of uprootedness. Yet, for as much as such occurrences speak to the fundamental untranslatability of cultural difference, they also reflect attempts at (re)creating, on a literary level, forms of transculturation. In Ferré's *Maldito amor* and its subsequent translations, including her *Sweet Diamond Dust*, this takes the form of a seemingly direct, yet much more complex textual genealogy, since most translations of the novel identify (at least more prominently) the Spanish version as the sole source text, when they have recourse to the author's English version as well. This is the case for the German and Japanese translations of the novel, by Wolfgang Binder and Takako Matsumoto. Thus, although *Kristallzucker* and *Norowatera ai* both acknowledge *Maldito amor* as their Ur-text, they nonetheless either make explicit reference to *Sweet Diamond Dust* in their paratextual material,[466] or, when analyzed carefully, follow the English version written by Ferré rather than the Spanish. This is particularly visible in passages where Puerto Rican references are re-contextualised and explained for the non-Caribbean

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[464] Alan West Durán, 'NANCY MOREJÓN: Transculturation, Translation and the Poetics of the Caribbean', *Callaloo*, 28, 4 (2005), 967–976 (p. 967).

[465] See note 57.

[466] In their title pages, both translations refer to the 1986 Mexican edition of *Maldito amor* as the original. For a more explicit reference to the English version of the novel in the Japanese translation, see Rosario Ferré, *Norowatera ai*, trans. by Takako Matsumoto (Tokyo: Gendaikikakushitsu Publishers, 2004), p. 219.

reader, a strategy that Ferré initiated in *Sweet Diamond Dust*. However briefly, the following extracts taken from the opening section of the novel, 'Guamaní', illustrate this particular point:

Guamaní se encuentra ubicado en la costa occidental de la isla, sobre un pequeño montículo a cuyos pies se despliega una sabana de aluvión que constituye uno de los valles más fértiles del mundo. Nuestro pueblo vivía, a fines del siglo pasado, de la producción de azúcar de una docena de pequeñas centrales situadas a su alrededor. Pero la caña no era el único producto que la sostenía.[467]

At that time, many years ago, we were convinced Guamaní was the most beautiful town on the island. Built on the gently Rolling slopes that descend from Mount Guamaní, it looks upon a savannah of fabulously fertile loam, whose sabled, furrowed topsoil is considered to be one of the richest in the world. Our town had lived, up to the turn of the century, from the produce of this soil, which the residents revered and took meticulous care of, as the most precious gift of their forebears, the Taino aborigenes, had bequeathed them. In Taino legends, all livings things on the island – men, animals, and plants alike – had been born from the sacred caves of Cacibajagua in Mount Guamaní, dwelling place of the god Yuquiyú. […] Guamani's main crop has always been sugarcane, and the townspeople lived from the bustling commerce produced around half a dozen small sugar mills that had sprung up around it during the nineteenth century. But sugar cane was not the only dry staple they traded in.[468]

Zu jener Zeit, vor vielen Jahren, waren wir überzeugt, dass Guamaní die schönste Stadt auf der Insel sei. Sie war an die sanften Hügel des Berges Guamaní gebaut und blickte auf eine Ebene mit unglaublich fruchtbaren Lehmboden, dessen dunkle, ungepflügte Krume als eine der reichsten der Welt gilt. Unsere Stadt hatte bis zur Jahrhundertwende vom Ertrag dieses Bodens gelebt, den ihre Bewohner hoch achteten und mit grösster Sorgfalt behandelten, und der ihnen als kostbarstes Geschenk von ihren Vorfahren, den Taíno-Indianern, vererbt worden war. Nach den Legenden der Taínos wurden alle Lebewesen auf der Insel, Menschen, Tiere und Pflanzen in den heiligen Grotten von Cacibajagua im Berg Guamaní, dem Ort des Gottes Yuquiyú, geboren. […] In Guamaní wurden schon immer vor allem Zuckerrohr gepflanzt, und die Stadtbewohner lebten vom regen Geschäft, das rund um ein halbes Dutzend Zuckerfabriken gedieh, die während des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts aufgeblüht waren. Aber Zuckerrohr war nich die einzige Ware, mit der sie handelten.[469]

[467] Ferré, *Maldito amor*, 3rd edn, pp. 15–16.

[468] Ferré, *Sweet Diamond Dust*, pp. 3–4.

[469] Rosario Ferré, *Kristallzucker*, trans. by Wolfgang Binder (Zurich: Rotpunktverlag, 1991), pp. 9–10.

As can be seen, the German translation follows more closely Ferré's *Sweet Diamond Dust* than *Maldito amor* in this particular instance – as in several others, especially where historical or cultural references have been inserted. Additional information on Taínos has been provided for the non-Hispanophone reader in both translations and the English rewriting doubtless served as matrix to the German, whose sentences are refashioned and re-ordered much in the same vein as the English was. Yet, *Sweet Diamond Dust* is not credited as a source text on the title page of the German edition, even if the translator later mentions the English version in his afterword.[470] Interestingly, the edition notes that the text was translated from the 'Puerto Rican Spanish', when it actually performs a transcultural translation whereby both the English and Spanish are subtly restored as complementary and by no means competing versions.[471] Ferré herself considered that her bilingual creations shared the status of originals: 'Considero que tanto mis libros en español como mis libros en inglés son originales.[472]' Yet, her decisions to translate her major works into English led to her rejection by some prominent literary figures on the island, as her choices were deemed ideological and her decision to (re)write in English signalled, to some, a form of bastardization, if not outright treason towards her native language.[473] Perhaps then, if (self-) translation is not necessarily readily interpreted as a manifestation of transculturation, subsequent translations that take into account the bilingual compositional practice of the Caribbean writer – even though they might not necessarily

[470] 'Ihren bisher einzigen Roman schrieb sie mit *Maldito amor* (1986), den nun unter dem Titel *Kristallzucker* in einer deutschen Fassung vorliegt, die auf einem Vergleich mit dem spanishen Text und der von der Autorin selbst vorgenommenen Übertragung ins Englische (*Diamond Dust*, 1988) basiert.' Rosario Ferré, *Kristallzucker*, p. 195.

[471] Elsa Noya reaches the same conclusion about both versions after exposing the two main sources of criticism held against Ferré and her work on *Sweet Diamond Dust* following its publication (see Ronald Méndez Clark and Iván Silén's reactions on the subject). Elsa Noya*, Canibalizar la biblioteca: debates del campo literario y cultural puertorriqueño (1990-2002)* (San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2015), p. 61.

[472] Rosario Ferré, *Maldito amor y otros cuentos* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2008), p. 246.

[473] '[…] las declaraciones de Rosario Ferré en pro de un proyecto anexionista, aparecidas en marzo de 1998 en las páginas del *New York Times*, en el que, además, se reconoce más norteamericana que John Wayne. A partir de esta situación, Silén denunciaba escatológicamente una reconversión ideológica que culminaba en la adopción de la lengua del invasor, ya no como traducción de un original español sino como lengua de escritura del texto original. Elsa Noya*, Canibalizar la biblioteca: debates del campo literario y cultural puertorriqueño (1990-2002)*, p. 48.

signpost this practice – do reactivate the authorial endeavour to tend towards cultural interaction and potential reciprocity. No matter where one positions oneself in those debates, cases such as Ferré's and Santiago's continue to speak to the difficulty of ascribing a strictly national label to a text that was composed in multiple languages, all the more so in (neo)colonial contexts such as Puerto Rico's. In that regard, Anthony Cordingley has a point when he argues that 'as the national self inscribes itself within the plurality of its languages, self-translation challenges the myth of the nation's monolithic culture – the very myth which justifies the expendability and domination of its minority cultures.'[474] Alejandro Álvarez Nieves's recent collection of poems *El proceso traductor* is another case in point and proves once again that Ferré and Santiago's acts of transcultural rewriting through self-translation continue to be explored by younger generations of Puerto Rican writers.[475]

5.3. (Self-) translation as a Caribbean condition?

COVER
solo durante los segundos
en que se desprende del pellejo,
el camaleón es libre.

el resto del tiempo,
se ve forzado a emular
la gama de voces
que lo reclaman.

apenas le queda
completa soltura en los ojos:
así podrá ver
la traición de la piel
arropándolo siempre.
porque no es suyo el color,
pertenece a un sombrío argot
asignado
a los leones de la tierra.[476]

[474] Anthony Cordingley, 'Introduction: Self-translation, going global', *Self-Translation: Brokering Originality in Hybrid Culture*, ed. by Anthony Cordingley (London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 1–10 (p. 7).
[475] Aspects of *El proceso traductor* will be discussed further on.
[476] Alejandro Álvarez Nieves, *El proceso traductor* (San Juan: Libros AC, 2012), p. 27.

In *The Cuban Condition: Translation and Identity in Modern Cuban literature*, Gustavo Pérez-Firmat argues that 'Cuban culture subsists in and through translation',[477] and contrasts Cuban identity, shaped by a provisional, transitory hence translational character, to other parts of the former Spanish empire in the Americas where an indigenous presence has been more firmly established, thereby leading to a more systematically rooted, regionalist literary style, what he calls 'foundational' *criollismo*.[478] Conversely, Edwin Gentzler has suggested that translation is a constitutive part of the cultural development and identity of the Americas at large, insisting that it is much more than a trope and a metaphor in the region, positing translation as 'a permanent condition in the Americas'[479]. If the correlation between translation, identity and culture is manifest both in Firmat's work on Cuba and in Gentzler's broader study of the Americas, a comprehensive exploration of the role of translation within Caribbean cultures and societies as well as without, in relation to global literary circulation, has yet to be conducted. For the time being, this section wishes to develop the question of (self-) translation beyond Puerto Rico, to other parts of the Caribbean, to test the hypothesis of a regional 'condition' when it comes to literary production. Whilst some scholars consider that West Indian writing is in itself an act of translation,[480] the corpus chosen here mainly draws on texts which exist in at least two versions and have been created by one and the same person. Yet, other texts, 'allographic' translations as well as bilingual pieces that focus on translation (see the epigraph), have also been included as they either present characteristics of diglossic realities within their discourse or because they renegotiate the boundaries that traditionally separate author from translator. In that particular instance, the genealogy of the work presupposes that translation has been imbedded in the creative process, thereby blurring any attempts at separating original and copy, entailing at the same time a collaborative and/or dual approach to the artistic process. The act of

[477] Gustavo Pérez Firmat, *The Cuban Condition: Translation and Identity in Modern Cuban Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 4.
[478] *Ibid*., p. 8.
[479] See Gentzler, *Translation and Identity in the Americas: New Directions in Translation Theory*, p. 5.
[480] Joanna Akai, 'Creole… English: West Indian writing as Translation', *TTR* 10, 1 (1997), 165–195 (p. 166).

translation will thus be presented as a practice that complicates genealogies and geographies of the self across the Caribbean and beyond, by examining cases of actual self-translation strictly performed or experienced within an insular or regional context, but aiming at both a local and a global readership. In so doing, the notions of authenticity and originality will be paid specific attention to. The chapter will conclude with a reflection on the impact and reception of acts of cultural (self-) translation, or non-translation as it were in some cases, to further analyse strategies of resistance deployed by the Caribbean writer when (s)he (re)negotiates his/her work(s) for global markets.

5.3.1. Complicating genealogies and geographies of the Caribbean (translated) self

When self-translating, one may wonder if the Caribbean writer/translator ultimately becomes a transcultural agent, inasmuch as his/her decision to adopt the (former) colonizer's language can at times be considered an act of cultural, or even political, treason. Maria Tymoczko has shown that translators are cultural agents, no matter how low their degree of intervention, as translation is and remains an act of activism and agency.[481] She observes, for example, that 'even if only minimally, implicitly, indirectly, or meretriciously, translations almost always construct a cultural image of a source'[482]. The examples of both Ferré and Santiago in that regard reflect shared concerns on the question of self-representation, particularly regarding the duality of Puerto-Rican identity that seems caught in the throes of two languages and two cultures. Both authors also confuse the genealogy of their writing, and, by the same token, of translation that is then no longer presented as a re-creation inspired by an original work, but rather as a constitutive part of the creative process. Similarly, Álvarez Nieves's 'Cover', reproduced in the epigraph opening this sub-section, presents the Puerto Rican writer/self as a chameleon who is forced to switch codes and obey contradictory forces depending on the situation that befalls them.[483] It should moreover be noted that the

[481] Maria Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators*, 3rd edn (London, New York: Routledge, 2014). See particularly chapter 5, 'Activism, Political Agency and the Empowerment of Translators', pp. 189–220.
[482] *Ibid*., p. 127.
[483] See the last stanza of the poem in particular.

afterword presenting the collection of poems introduces the writer/translator as a negotiator and wizard, whose work is highly evocative of that of an alchemist.[484] Although mostly composed in Spanish, the poems of the collection all bear traces of English which take the form of titles that have been fused together by the author at the beginning of the book – a technique recalling the Surrealist game of *cadavre exquis* – only to be later on scattered as fragments that open each poem, as exemplified in 'Cover'. Packaged as a work composed in Spanish, at least judging by the book cover, *El proceso traductor* nevertheless makes use of English utterances to complicate a linear, monolingual reading of the Puerto Rican/Caribbean self,[485] whilst castigating, on the farcical mode, translation as a form of treason.[486]

The question of directionality in self-translation is also of prime importance, particularly in diglossic or (neo)colonial contexts, as it orients the reading of the translational movement in time and place, from an original, authoritative text, to a rewritten, second version. In such a light, if we agree that 'a cultural image' does emerge from the source text, the Caribbean self-translator may run the risk of being lured by ethnocentric forces of assimilation when translating him/herself for a global market, by offering an image of the Caribbean that fits Western models of representation. Adopting a sociological stance on self-translation, Rainier Grutman has warned against such phenomena:

> Deciding to translate oneself can therefore become a truly Cornelian dilemma. Certainly, making their work known *urbi et orbi* without needing to wait for a translator to do so, can give bicultural writers with (near-) native access to a 'major' language competitive advantage. They can become their own ambassadors, agents and even career-brokers, but they will do so at their own risk. While it is true that autographic translations lend visibility, they can also conceal the fact that the work was originally created

[484] The afterword by Francisca Noguerol Jiménez, from the Universidad de Salamanca, is entitled 'Trujamán y Mago: *El proceso traductor* de Alejandro Álvarez Nieves'. See Álvarez Nieves, *El proceso traductor,* pp. 61–73.

[485] Here, explicit reference to the Caribbean self is made on the blurb of the back cover: '***El proceso traductor*** intenta llevar al lector por el trayecto que supone la fisura discursiva característica de toda traducción. Las instancias lingüísticas vienen acompañadas de vivencias: un caribeño en un país extraño, un cuerpo en busca de un idioma, un amor a la caza de alguien que lo enuncie.' Álvarez Nieves, *El proceso traductor*.

[486] See the ultimate section of the poem, which could read as a palindrome of the initial paragraph in English and of the poems altogether: 'Casi recuperado, artista revela una farsa, un velo que le cubre la cara, seguido de una caricia serena. "¡Traidor!"—gritaron, al dispersarse un polvo sangriento en un llamado herido, mientras hologramas de girasoles, entrecruzados con el atardecer, ejecutaban los ritos de primavera.' *Ibid*., p. 59.

> in a 'minor' source language, thereby reinforcing the dominant position of the 'major' target language. The more the latter gravitates towards or occupies a central position within the linguistic galaxy, the greater the danger of the minority language-original being ignored.[487]

In his statement, Grutman makes a case for minority languages and literary productions from diglossic contexts, criteria which Puerto Rico does not quite fit, but that remain overall true, albeit in varying degrees, for many other Caribbean islands and territories. Thus, some Caribbean writers have expressed themselves on the relationships they entertain with their works and the fear they experience at the idea of being somehow disowned when being translated. Maryse Condé has exchanged views with her husband/translator Richard Philcox on the challenges they both face when working together and the author has particularly insisted on her sense of ownership, admitting 'the jealousy of an author who dreads being dispossessed and sees enemies everywhere'[488]. Others, like Raphaël Confiant, have highlighted the intimacy inherent in self-translation, going as far as equating multilingual (re)writing to 'linguistic bigamy'[489]. Some cases of allographic translation also contribute to new textual genealogies, particularly when they are explicitly thought out as part of the genesis of the work. Gerty Dambury's *La Jamaïque est mon Afrique* exemplifies this point. Originally from Guadeloupe, Dambury was awarded the Carbet prize in 2016 and published several books with *Éditions du Manguier*, among which *La Jamaïque est mon Afrique*, a collection of thoughts she put together as the result of meeting Michel Mélange, who then became her translator. Mélange had encouraged her to publish the series of travel notes she took in French as a dyptich, in which his creole variation would echo the original. This dual genealogy of the work is particularly visible in the book, as Dambury's liminal tribute to her translator and their collaborative literary project is also reproduced on the back cover and reads as follows:

> La Jamaïque est mon Afrique.

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[487] Rainer Grutman, 'A sociological glance at self-translation and self-translators', in *Self-Translation: Brokering Originality in Hybrid Culture*, ed. by Anthony Cordingley (London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 63–80 (p. 74).

[488] *Intimate Enemies: Translation in Francophone Contexts*, ed. by Kathryn Batchelor and Claire Bisdorff, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), p. 95.

[489] Cited in Lise Gauvin's *Écrire pour qui? L'écrivain francophone et ses publics* (Paris: Karthala, 2007), p. 123.

> Pourquoi ce recueil d'impressions ?
> La question qu'il convient de se poser serait plutôt : comment est née l'idée de ce recueil ?
> D'une rencontre. Avec Michel Mélange, qui, réagissant à l'un de mes petits chroniques d'un voyage dans notre Guadeloupe natale, m'a insufflé le goût d'aller plus avant, d'en écrire davantage et de concevoir un ouvrage bilingue : en français et en créole.[490]

Here, translation is unambiguously acknowledged as a key part of the compositional process, even if the version produced in Guadeloupean creole is not the author's. *La Jamaïque est mon Afrique* is also worth mentioning, as it translates into – rather than 'from' – creole and presents a bilingual object that, far from obliterating the 'minor' language, gives credit to it and is even packaged as such.[491] The blurb on the back cover is in both languages and the publisher has made it a commitment to offer multilingual editions to readers based in the metropole as well as in the DOMs, thus blurring expected geographies of circulation for a Caribbean work.[492] No matter how divergent views on (self-) translation remain, they still articulate thoughts on the potential that translation has, for better or for worse, in renegotiating Caribbean self-representations. Ultimately, when inhabiting the privileged position of both author and translator, the Caribbean writer may at times have to espouse ethnocentric forces of domestication, but they may equally turn assimilationist tendencies on their head and, through their transcultural performance and own positioning towards cultural (self-)

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[490] Gerty Dambury, *La Jamaïque est mon Afrique*, 2nd edn (Paris: Éditions du Manguier, 2015), p. 5.

[491] Corinna Krause's study of self-translated Gaelic poetry shows, by contrast, a very different reality: 'These volumes [bilingual editions of Gaelic-English poetry] used English only for most paratextual features (see Thomson's *Meall Garbh/ The Rugged Mountain*), in other words signifying a steady departure from Gaelic as a literary medium for publication. […] Wilson McLeod initiated the debate with an article aptly entitled 'The Packaging of Gaelic Poetry', in which he points towards the ever-increasing practice of *en-face* English translations in Gaelic poetry publication and anthologies. He also underlines the colonizing role of English, which finds its way onto spines and covers of books presenting Gaelic poetry as if English were their sole language of publication.' Corinna Krause, ''Why bother with the original?': Self-translation and Scottish Gaelic poetry', in *Self-Translation: Brokering Originality in Hybrid Culture*, ed. by Anthony Cordingley (London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 127–140 (p. 128).

[492] The *Éditions du Manguier* are based in Paris but are committed to publishing works that are read by 'local' (Caribbean) audiences as well as metropolitan ones. See for example the trilingual edition of Dambury's play *Trames/Shades/Sombras* aimed at cross-Caribbean audiences. < http://www.leseditionsdumanguier.com/?p=24> [accessed 1 July 2017]

translation or non-translation, acquire a new sense of legitimation for themselves and what can at times be considered their 'endangered language(s)'[493].

5.3.2. Cultural (self-) translation *vs.* non-translation?

As has been shown, self-translation offers a platform of self-representation for the author/translator who is able to reflect on his/her creative practice on the thresholds of the text. Arguably though, when marketing themselves for a global audience, Caribbean writers face the risk of dis-locating their work, as they may have to shed or at least downplay specific characteristics of their texts that refer to their original, 'narrow'[494] locus of enunciation. Hence the refusal on the part of some writers to (self) translate their works into a dominant language that would somehow uproot their original culture.[495] Others have privileged forms of strategic opacity in their (re)writing, employing various cushioning devices as well as paratextual material to ensure better access to the text for non-Caribbean readers, while simultaneously carving out a space for cultural difference in which language would ultimately serve a decolonizing agenda. Such strategies can be observed, for example, in Chamoiseau's works, especially those in which he opts for a prolific use of paratext, most notably footnotes. Rather than following a traditional, potentially ethnocentric use of footnotes, Chamoiseau has turned this practice into a counter-ethnography of Caribbean realities, relying on subversion to create multiple levels of narration that question the traditional view of Antillean self-translation as an inherited practice of self-legitimation. *Solibo Magnificent* shows that the author took an active part in the translational process and the collaborative approach adopted here could be read as an extension of Chamoiseau's own literary project – even though the novel is not a self-translation in the technical sense of the word. Yet, Rose-Myriam Réjouis's afterword acts as an endorsement of the author's work, which she defends against

[493] The term is borrowed from the online Atlas of Endangered Languages published by UNESCO and is also an echo to Michael Cronin's works on minor languages on the brink of extinction. See for example *Translation and Globalization* (London, New York: Routledge, 2003) or the more recent *Eco-Translation* (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2017).

[494] The adjective is in no way condemning here and is meant as 'too place-specific'. The term rather evokes the scalar emphasis often encountered in studies of globalization. See chapter 6 on this particular point.

[495] Although not from the Caribbean, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's attitudes towards self-translation and writing in Gikuyu comes to mind here.

accusations of exoticism, (re)placing at the same time the translational process as an essential component of the novel's 'afterlife':

> Chamoiseau's writing is not an orientalism because he does not use Creole as an ornament. It is not exotic; rather, it is idiosyncratic. […] Likewise, this translation writes upon Chamoiseau's text, while using many others, and is thus too a palimpsest.[496]

Within the text, Chamoiseau's playful 'misuse' of footnotes and parenthetical glosses also attests to a strategy of opacification that runs counter to a widely held understanding of paratext used mostly as a clarifying tool in the face of cultural or linguistic ambiguity.[497] Rather, by highlighting the gap between languages and by staging the dynamics at play between written and oral forms of communication, the writer exposes Caribbean literature as a translational contact zone where transculturation is best rendered through the tension and ambiguity that resides in the absence of a perfect, transparent equivalence. Chamoiseau bypasses debates articulated around either translation as a means of absolute clarification aimed at unhindered, (often) binary modes of communication or non-translation as a strategy of resistance that seeks to challenge a dominant, (possibly) normative cultural and/or linguistic model. Instead, this example privileges a dynamic approach that relies on irony and heteroglossic opacity to present strategies of translation that turn on their head one-to-one modalities of textual transfers, whereby *one* linguistic recreation should replace one *singular* original. Rather, (self-) translation not only illustrates the constraints under which a Caribbean author writes, it also exposes the intricacies of notions such as authenticity and originality. Perhaps the notion of credibility, or that of a 'sense of authenticity'[498] should be preferred over a more adamant 'authenticity' when dealing with Caribbean (re)writings, whilst the principle of organicity could replace that of originality, as has been suggested in chapter 4. This seems

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[496] Rose-Myriam Réjouis, 'Afterword: Sublime Tumble', in Patrick Chamoiseau, *Solibo Magnificent* (New York: Vintage, 1999), p. 184.

[497] 'Mon opacité confrontée à l'opacité de l'autre est une dynamique de la communication. Accepter l'autre signifie accepter ce qu'il y a d'irréductible en lui. L'accepter sans même se poser de questions. Je crois que, désormais, on peut jouer avec la note, les traductions, les parenthèses, et les voir comme un jeu littéraire, un jeu musical, un jeu poétique, et non comme un processus de clarification de texte.' Lise Gauvin, *Écrire pour qui? L'écrivain francophone et ses publics* (Paris: Karthala, 2007), p. 48.

[498] Chantal Zabus speaks of an 'air of authenticity' about some African writers trying to convey a sense of the Igbo language in their novels otherwise written in English, whilst rejecting the notion of equivalence. See Chantal Zabus, *The African Palimpsest: Indigenization of Language in the West African Europhone Novel*, 2nd edn (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), p. 151.

all the more adequate as acts of rewriting have contributed to a complex process of re-appropriation of the Western canon in the context of Caribbean literature, but may also reveal the more prosaic publishing or financial dire straits that a writer from the region can be in.[499] In that regard, Césaire's *Cahier* and its many re-editions doubtless attest to the limited, often short-lived publishing experiences that are common practice throughout the Caribbean – although a more nuanced approach to the circulation of literature on a regional level will be adopted in chapter 6. Nonetheless, as Rachel Douglas reminds us, the lack of critical attention paid to autographic rewriting, in itself a form of (self-) translation, is favorized by the limited presence of established, viable circuits of literary circulation and diffusion within the Caribbean:

> It is normal practice, for example, for a reader or a critic to buy one copy and not all the editions available of a text. Another factor is that not all editions of a particular text are equally available. Some editions are easier to obtain than others, depending on when and where that particular edition was published, and on the size of the print run. It is particularly difficult to obtain editions published by small publishing houses in the Caribbean and authors' self-published work.[500]

Douglas is also prompt to note that internationally recognized writers such as Frankétienne or Derek Walcott follow the traditional publishing patterns observed in the region, starting off, namely, with self- or local publishing before they acquire a literary fame that then allows them to be (re)published in metropolitan centres.[501] Frankétienne's rewritings/self-translations are particularly interesting in that regard. In the French version of *Dezafi*, *Les Affres d'un défi*, the author provides the reader with a glossary (absent from the original) where each entry can be read independently from the text, as the references are not signposted in the novel. Douglas sees in this use of paratextual material an attempt to bridge cultural difference by making the text more accessible to international audiences, whilst engaging in a 'clearly intercultural as well as interlinguistic' dialogue with the Francophone reader.[502] Drawing on Douglas's analysis,

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[499] Both trends have been highlighted by Rachel Douglas in her study on Frankétienne. See Rachel Douglas, *Frankétienne and Rewriting: A Work in Progress* (Lanham, MD; Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2009), pp. 11–18.
[500] *Ibid*., p. 12.
[501] *Ibid*.
[502] *Ibid*., p. 34.

I would add that, through the glossary entries, the reader is also made aware of the transcultural nature of their own language, insofar as its trans-poetic potential is made explicit by the author/self-translator. The following example illustrates this observation:

> PINGA-SEREIN : Boisson alcoolique préparée avec la moitié d'un citron qui serait restée attachée à la branche du citronnier pendant une nuit entière pour y subir l'action de l'air. Cette boisson constitue un poison violent pour celui qui, après en avoir bu, s'exposerait à l'humidité ou à la fraîcheur de la nuit. D'où son nom de pinga-serein, c'est-à-dire : prends garde au serein.[503]

Here, the act of self-translation relocates a (Caribbean) local reality within a more global Francophone context in an attempt to familiarize the metropolitan reader with a Haitian culture most likely unknown to them. In so doing, Frankétienne exhumes the latent relationship between sound and meaning and unearths the linguistic genealogy between French and Kreyól. Self-translation therefore makes for the necessity of adapting one's self as an author-translator to the receiving audience, whilst offering the possibility for the reader to rethink their own culture less along state-regulated linguistic borders, but more as a contact zone of which a given Caribbean reality is but one component, among many possible others. (Self-) translation then becomes a condition not only of the Caribbean author, who presents, at one and the same time a translated, yet somehow intrinsically untranslatable text, but also of the readers who must perform, in turn, an act of translation of their own, that is navigate between and among different linguistic and cultural spaces, including those they are most familiar with. Their exploration of the Caribbean might at times be facilitated and at others obscured by the paratextual choices made by the self-translator and their publisher. But it confirms the necessity of adopting a cross-Caribbean approach to the region's literary production in order to site the impact of translation as well as its aftershocks, perhaps best exemplified by the poor intraregional circulation of local, translingual literature. In that regard, Firmat's claim that 'Cuban [and to a larger extent, Caribbean] culture subsists in and through translation' finds some limits where translation as a literary practice is concerned. Looking at (self-) translation as a form of rewriting, in other words as an autonomous, yet interconnected, complementary literary creation ultimately helps challenge views according to which authenticity can

[503] Frankétienne, *Les Affres d'un défi* (Roque d'Anthéron: Vents d'ailleurs, 2010), pp. 217–218.

only emanate from texts that are '*more* than a translation'[504]. Rethinking Caribbean literary productions along the axis of (self-) translation is of no lesser significance, as it allows new insights into alternative modes of cross-cultural, heterolingual dynamics in what otherwise remains a largely fragmented region, particularly when it enters and navigates the waters of the international literary market.

[504] Although Rachel Douglas's monograph on Frankétienne has proved of much help in the analysis of the Haitian writer's unique approach to rewriting, it repeatedly draws a distinction between 'rewriting' and 'translation', demoting the latter to a second-rank artistic practice. See her section on 'Transcreation, autotranslation, rewriting', in which she draws from Raphaël Confiant and Mae-Lyna Beaubrun's previous readings of *Dezafi* and *Les Affres d'un défi* and likewise argues that 'the term "translation" is hardly appropriate'. Douglas, *Frankétienne and Rewriting: A Work in Progress*, p. 32.

6. Sub-liminal correspondences: transoceanic creolizations in the making

As pointed out in the preface, the remaining chapters of the thesis will be devoted to the study of alternative modes of circulation for Caribbean literature in translation. The term 'alternative' suggests that peripheral modes or spaces of literary circulation will be taken into account in an attempt to seek transversal substitutes to the core-periphery model emphasized in World Literature studies.[505] The present chapter intends to look more specifically at texts that have been translated for non-Caribbean audiences and seek to recreate transoceanic echoes between the islands and territories of the Caribbean and insular spaces from the Indian Ocean on the one hand, and the African continent on the other. Such initiatives invite a reflection on the strategies deployed by the agents involved in the process of translation, more particularly the translator him- or herself and the publisher, to create cultural and linguistic correspondences between the different locales. This process, as will be argued, entails forms of displacement and de/reterritorialization inherent to translation, but seeks, at the same time, to re-connect (more or less explicitly) text and subtext as well as marginalized peoples and their histories with equally, yet differently silenced communities. In so doing, literary transoceanic crossings will be analysed as possible channels of investigation for the (re)formation of a creole continuum between Caribbean vernaculars and linguistic variants from other regions of the world. The particular selection of texts observed for this chapter and the next has been made in the hope to bring to the fore and even restore less visible or heard-of narratives within an already peripheral classification of literature known as 'Caribbean literature'. In this chapter, specific attention will be devoted to the treatment of East Indians in David Dabydeen's *The Counting House* (1996) and its French translation by Ananda Devi published under the title *Terres maudites* (2000). The author and the translator's shared Hindu origins will serve as a starting point to the textual analysis to show how the process of translation can not only help (re)create and bring together transcolonial histories, but also generate interstitial sites of local resistance. Such sites may take the form of paratextual material added onto the text, mainly in the form of footnotes or glossary

[505] See chapter 7.

entries, but may also correspond to subtle insertions made to the text itself (such as parenthetical additions, incises, italics, etc.). Here, thresholds will be studied as possible sub-liminal links that allow transoceanic correspondences between Caribbean and non-Caribbean insularities, testing the applicability of Brathwaite's 'sub-marine unity'[506] to literary translation and its subsequent modalities of circulation and diffusion. Thresholds will therefore be considered as a conceptual space that generates manifestations of cross-creolization and calls for the preservation of archipelagic identities. This chapter is also concerned with the ways in which thresholds may function as sites that underline the shifts and possible rifts that occur during the passage from one marginalized culture to another in the process of translation. Ultimately, the aim is to show how the presence of sites of cultural and linguistic retention observed in the act of translation can help establish transversal, rather than transnational, correspondences between the Caribbean and other spheres of the world. The rationale for this mode of cross-oceanic dialogue is to move beyond the inherited colonial logics of verticality that have shaped the Caribbean and to foreground instead a latitudinal mode of reading shared histories as they can be shaped and informed by translation.

6.1. Transcolonial experiences of indentureship

The characters in Dabydeen's *The Counting House* cross over multiple thresholds, as the two geographical settings of the novel, India and later Guyana, suggest. The novel follows the lives of indentured labourers departing from India and settling in the Caribbean. Sharing a common Indian heritage with the author, his French translator, Ananda Devi, is a writer from Mauritius who describes herself as 'almost Dabydeen's francophone "counterpart"'. [507] She too comes from an island that was formerly colonized and where Creole is widely spoken. Yet, if her dialect, Mauritian Creole, may share common features with Guyanese Creole, it does not describe the same realities; hence her decision to invent a language that situates itself in-between the two forms of Creole.[508]

[506] Brathwaite, cited as an introduction to Glissant, *Poétique de la Relation* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), page unnumbered. Also as an epigraph to *Contradictory Omens*.

[507] *Intimate Enemies: Translation in Francophone Contexts*, ed. by Kathryn Batchelor and Claire Bisdorff, Francophone Postcolonial Studies, New series v. 4 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), p. 218.

[508] In an email interview conducted by Julia Waters in 2009, Devi explained: 'I couldn't simply translate the Guyanese English into Mauritian Creole, since the latter is further removed from French than Guyanese English

This section will focus on the various thresholds that are crossed in the process, be they linguistic, cultural or geographical, raising the question of the possibility of a continuum of Creoles. Drawing on Brinda Mehta's definition of the *kala pani*, identified as 'a discourse of rupture that initiates transgressive boundary crossings through creative (self)-assertions in literary production', the margins of the text in translation, whether they take the form of footnotes or alterations located in the interstices of the text, will first be presented as *loci* of cultural resistance.[509] Yet, such contact between the text and its immediate surroundings also entails a certain porosity, as the footnotes cannot function without the text they refer to, and the very presence of paratext suggests that, on its own, Dabydeen's text cannot reach Francophone (metropolitan French) readers. The thresholds present in the translation can therefore be said to permeate and contaminate the text, creating a new space of mediation between the sacred and the profane.

6.1.1. Translational crossings of the *kala pani*

Indentureship is at the heart of *The Counting House*. The reader follows the lives of Rohini and Vidia, a young couple from India who accept to go to British Guyana, lured by the prospect of a better future there. The Caribbean island is compared to the Ramayana, the Indian promised land.[510] However, the decision to cross over to the Caribbean is also immediately fraught with tension and ambiguity, as the figure of the 'Kangani' (recruiter) is presented as a 'Mukti', a charlatan, whose empty promises are soon exposed by the village elder.[511] The original title of the novel refers to business arrangements and human transactions that also pervade the narrative, a feature that does not find a direct echo in the French version, as the title *Terres maudites* is imbued with different connotations.[512] As a writer herself, Devi is particularly sensitive to the impact that a title has on the reader and has noted, for example, how her novel *Pagli*, initially published in France and later in India in an eponymous English self-translation, sounded

is from standard English. Whereas Anglophone readers can quite readily understand the Guyanese, francophone readers would not be able to understand Mauritian Creole as directly'. *Ibid.*, p. 228.

[509] Brinda J. Mehta, *Diasporic (dis)locations: Indo-Caribbean Women Writers Negotiate the Kala Pani* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2004), p. 4.

[510] David Dabydeen, *The Counting House*, rev. edn (Leeds: Peepal Tree, 2005) p. 14.

[511] *Ibid*.

[512] The French title suggests the idea of cursed lands.

more mysterious and foreign to French audiences, whereas it was perfectly transparent to their Indian counterparts.[513] If easier access to the text can explain the publisher's decision to opt for *Terres maudites* in French as well as to add footnotes to the text, it nonetheless provides us with an interesting example of underlying tensions with the translator. On the one hand, the presence of footnotes in Devi's version indicates that Dabydeen's text cannot be read on its own in French. As such, the footnotes illustrate the impossibility of an unmediated, direct crossing from one culture to another. This seems all the more verified as Devi's own decision to create a new form of Creole, rather than choosing Mauritian Creole to render Dabydeen's Guyanese specificities exemplifies Antoine Berman's claim that 'unfortunately, a vernacular clings tightly to its soil and completely resists any direct translating into another vernacular'[514]. On the other hand, though, tension arises between the cultural agents represented by the translator and the publisher, as Devi's presence in the paratext could be described as *in absentia*, since the notes are not marked as *N.d.T.* (*Note du Traducteur*), but simply by asterisks. In an email exchange with Julia Waters, the translator confirmed 'that the use of scholarly, explanatory footnotes in *Terres maudites* was the idea of the publisher, Dapper, and not her own'.[515]

Furthermore, when the reader takes into account the paratextual elements in *Terres maudites*, (s)he realizes that the footnotes rarely serve to solve linguistic conundrums. [516] Rather, they offer further insight into Indianness. Their purpose seems to be closer to that of the exegesis, inasmuch as they can be read as a set of cultural references compiled to explain various aspects of Hinduism and Indian mores. Most of the paratext thus consists in explaining Indian mythology, the caste system, culinary utensils and dishes or garments. However, some terms are deemed transparent enough for the French reader: 'Le curry de pommes de terre et le *dhal** bouillonnaient dans les chaudrons de fer.' [517]

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[513] Email interview conducted with Ananda Devi on 24 April 2015.

[514] Antoine Berman, 'Translation and the Trial of the Foreign', trans. by and cited in Lawrence Venuti, *The Translation Studies Reader* (Routledge, 2012), p. 250.

[515] Kathryn Batchelor and Claire Bisdorff, *Intimate Enemies: Translation in Francophone Contexts*, p. 230.

[516] Typical use of such footnotes appears in puns. There is one such occurrence in *Terres maudites*, but Devi informs the reader of what might be lost in translation directly in the text, using appositions: '*Sunt* c'est comme *scunt*, sexe de femme. *Lachrimae* ressemble au prénom la vieille Madame Gladstone, et *Rerum*, c'est la même chose que *rear up*, « se lever d'un coup », ce que le pasteur appelle « résurrection ».' David Dabydeen, *Terres maudites*, trans. by Ananda Devi (Paris: Editions Dapper, 2000), p. 156.

[517] *Ibid*., p. 23.

The use of italics and the asterisk mark the term 'dhal' as foreign, unlike 'curry' which is more familiar to French readers, while in Dabydeen's source text the two terms are not differentiated from one another, let alone italicized.[518] This taxonomy of sorts could be interpreted as unilateral mediation on the part of the publisher, all the more so as during an exchange with a current editor working for Dapper, the interviewee herself mentioned a general tendency, among French publishers, to 'intervene' in texts. [519] It should however be underlined that Dapper is first and foremost a museum that specializes in African and indigenous cultures, and that their books of fiction were but one branch of their activities.[520] As such, the paratext in *Terres maudites* could, in part, be read as an ethnographer's attempt to present and describe Otherness.

Yet, the footnotes are part of a broader strategy at work in the translation of Dabydeen's novel, which consists in turning paratextual thresholds into spaces of creative crossings that ultimately participate in re-creating the hybridity present in *The Counting House*. As Mehta contends in her analysis of the *kala pani*, the experience of crossing dark waters bears negative connotations of rejection and impurity:

> *Kala pani* crossings were initially identified with the expatriation of convicts, low castes and other "undesirable" elements of society from the mainland to neighbouring territories to rid society of any visible traces of social pollution; those who braved the *kala pani* were automatically compromising their Hinduness. [521]

Following this metaphor of contamination, the paratextual elements present in Devi's translation can be considered as traces. A footnote is in itself a liminal space which marks both a presence, through its physical insertion, and an absence, that of an impossible unmediated translation. Ananda Devi leaves her own footprints on Dabybeen's work, particularly through appositions or in-gloss comments, a technique she has used in her own writing as an attempt to explain vernacular elements. [522] The

[518] 'Iron pots bubbling with potato curry and dhall, wooden trays bearing water-melons, mangoes and jilips…'. David Dabydeen, *The Counting House*, p. 16.
[519] Face-to-face exchange conducted in Paris on Friday 19 March 2015, during which the interviewee, who was not employed by Dapper when Devi's translation was published, kindly accepted to discuss the museum/publishing house's activities.
[520] Dapper's publishing activities are now focusing more on their exhibition catalogues.
[521] Mehta, *Diasporic (dis)locations: Indo-Caribbean Women Writers Negotiate the Kala Pani*, p. 5.
[522] Such examples abound in Ananda Devi's *Moi, l'interdite* (Paris: Editions Dapper, 2000), in which the vernacular is very often connected with memories from the narrator's childhood and her 'grandmother attic':

following extracts testify to this presence, in which the trace, marked by italics, indicates a passage, a crossing of sorts, onto the page:

Is spit I get, not gentle rain and breeze, she wanted to answer, a middle-age man rising and falling and fanning me with his flab, and he so excited he fart and dribble, and by the time he finish my whole face wet with spit and the bed smelling of horse-manure. This is what I do for all-you ungrateful dogs, she wanted to say, and is my mother make me do it. […] Like you standing over me now, raging with fire inside you which you want to put in me, purify me, and me kneeling at church-altar, but is not blessing I want but my fucking ham which I fuck for, roll in the dust for […]. Let me pass, she ordered, but no word came from her mouth, only a sob which she dampened immediately for she would cry real tears for him, not for any of them, not even for her mother. [523]

C'est salive que j'attrape, pas pluie fine et brise, aurait-elle voulu lui répondre, *un vieux homme qui monte et descend et me vente avec sa chair flasque et il excite tellement qu'il pète et il bave et quand il a fini ma figure est mouillée de salive et le lit pue comme fumier cheval. C'est ça que je fais pour vous tous, bâtards ingrats*, elle aurait voulu dire, *et c'est ma mère qui me force faire ça. […] Comme toi tu deboutes au-dessus de moi maintenant, avec du feu qui brûle dans tes entrailles et veux mettre ce feu en moi pour me purifier quand je mets à genoux devant toi comme devant l'autel, mais c'est pas ta bénédiction que je veux, bordel, c'est mon foutu jambon, pour lequel j'ai baisé, pour lequel je me suis roulée dans la poussière* […].

« Laisse-moi passer », ordonna-t-elle, mais pas un mot ne sortit de sa bouche, seulement un sanglot qu'elle étouffa immédiatement parce qu'elle ne voulait pas pleurer de vraies larmes pour lui, ni pour

'Le bruit de la serrure est une blessure au milieu de la nuit. La porte s'ouvre. Une barre de lumière jaune crisse sur le plancher et rampe jusqu'à moi. Une voix lointaine et méprisée tente de me rassurer – *soja rajkumari, soja* – dors, dors, dors, ma princesse…' (19). The vernacular is clearly identified as the language of intimacy and female filiation.

Similar emotional ties to one's mother tongue have been identified in Esmeralda Santiago's use of Spanish in her autobiography (ch. 5.3.), in which Spanish expressions pepper the English text and are followed by a literal translation rather than an idiomatic one in chapter headings.

[523] Dabydeen, *The Counting House*, pp. 117–118.

aucun d'entre eux, ni même pour sa mère. [524]

The typography here reveals the discrepancy between the female character's wishes to voice her resistance and her utter inability to do so, as the return to non-italicized text shows when she actually replies to the male character. Devi's choice of the conditional tense for 'she wanted to reply' or 'she wanted to say' further highlights the character's powerlessness. Thus, the interstitial spaces of the translation, in the guise of italics, not only participate in showing the woman's alienation, they also add further levels of tension to the source text which becomes, when referring to Chantal Zabus's terminology, a 'schizo-text', as 'the reader is left with the sense of reading a text with interlinear translation.'[525] The paratextual elements such as footnotes and the use of italics in *Terres maudites* may be read as signs of intrusion that mediate or perhaps, hamper the reading experience. Yet, if those marginal spaces of the text are sites of tension, it is precisely to invite readers to leave their comfort zone and discover thresholds of hybridity, where the sacred and the profane intermingle.

6.1.2. Translating 'coolitude'[526] across the Atlantic

As was signaled earlier, Devi's dual position as writer and (self-) translator breaks the boundaries of authorship between writer and translator, especially since her work as translator has been deemed 'transcolonial' and interventionist: 'Not only does Devi consistently "de-Caribbeanize" the language of the India section of *The Counting House*, but there is also one instance when, in contrast, she actually "Indianizes" a standard English term from the source text'.[527] Her rewriting of Dabydeen's text therefore not only

[524] Dabydeen, *Terres maudites*, pp. 193–194.
[525] Chantal Zabus, 'Othering the Foreign Language in the West African Europhone Novel', *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature/Revue Canadienne de Littérature Comparée*, 17 (1990), 348–66 (p. 356).
[526] The term is borrowed from Mauritian poet Kahl Torabully who coined the term in 1992 and can been understood as follows: 'The term 'coolitude,' which inevitably echoes *Négritude*, is defined by the author as the "alter ego de la créolité" or the "acclimatisation de l'Inde en terre plurielle." Positing a dynamic and open approach, coolitude challenges received ideas, urging one, on the one hand, to read the Indian element of the creolization process, and, on the other hand, to capture the creolization of the Indian diasporic inheritance.' Véronique Bragard, *Transoceanic Dialogues: Coolitude in Caribbean and Indian Ocean Literatures* (Brussels, New York: Peter Lang, 2008), pp. 20–21.
[527] Batchelor and Bisdorff, *Intimate Enemies: Translation in Francophone Contexts*, p. 224.

calls into question the loose notion of authority in translation, as seen throughout the thesis, it also offers an insight into possible forms of correspondences between experiences of East Indianness in the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean.

According to Devi herself, her ethnic origins placed her as an ideal choice to translate Dabydeen's novel.[528] Likewise, the recent translation of *Tail of the Blue Bird*, written by Ghanaian author Nii Ayikwei Parkes, and translated into French by Sika Fakambi, herself from Benin, was awarded several literary prizes, including the prestigious Prix Baudelaire.[529] *Notre quelque part* has received much attention in the media that has often drawn parallels between the author and his translator's 'similar', albeit relatively so, origins.[530] In both instances, the translator's supposed invisibility seems to have been adjusted to foreground instead her common ethnic heritage with the author. However, to go back to Dabydeen and Devi's case, as has been observed in transoceanic studies of coolitude, the situation of East Indians in the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean differs markedly from one insular or continental space to another, depending, for one thing, on the degree of interpenetration with other communities.[531] One may wonder, then, about the extent to which Devi's own experience as a (privileged) Hindu woman from Mauritius influenced her translation of Dabydeen's novel, set in Guyana, where conflictual relationships can be felt between the different communities represented in the novel. Do the recurrently marginalized or stereotyped East Indian

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[528] See email interview conducted by Julia Waters, in which Ananda Devi admits that she 'was particularly well placed to translate this book'. *Ibid.*, p. 218.

[529] Nii Ayikwei Parkes, *Notre quelque part*, trans. by Sika Fakambi (Paris: Zulma, 2013).

[530] On the publisher's website, various links to interviews, radio programmes, public readings and other blogs are accessible to the reader at http://www.zulma.fr/livre-notre-quelque-part-572086.html. Zulma also lists the various prizes that were awarded to the author and his translator. Genette labels such practices as 'peritext' in his *Seuils*.

[531] See Bragard's *Transoceanic Dialogues: Coolitude in Caribbean and Indian Ocean Literatures* or 'L'Empreinte des kala pani dans la littérature caribéenne et mauricienne: une comparaison transcoloniale', *L'Esprit Créateur*, 50, 2 (2010), 86–94, in which she writes: 'Pour l'Océan Indien, la proximité de l'Inde et le pouvoir politique fort des Indiens à l'Île Maurice a donné lieu à une culture très indianocentrée et très rivée sur le pôle indien avec lequel l'Île garde des collaborations fortes. […] Cette domination coolie et le communalisme exacerbé depuis les années 80 par les politiciens hindous ont donné lieu à un repli sur soi alimenté par une peur de la créolisation souvent dénoncée par des écrivains comme Ananda Devi. Dans le cas des Caraïbes anglophones, nous observons une histoire plus conflictuelle puisque dans certains pays tel le Guyana d'importants conflits ethniques ont opposé descendants d'Indiens et descendants d'Africains, conflits qui sont revisités par plusieurs auteurs. Enfin, dans le cas des Antilles francophones, la politique assimilationniste du colonialisme français a quant à lui largement effacé l'élément indien en Guadeloupe et en Martinique.' (p. 87).

voices from the Caribbean acquire a new status in the process of translation? First, it should be noted that in *The Counting House*, Dabydeen inserts dialogues and extracts written in creolized English which he attributes to most indigenous characters, regardless of their roots (whether of African or Indian descent). Julia Waters has shown, in fact, how the author privileged an idiosyncratic approach over a realistic one, inasmuch as most characters 'display a discordant and non-naturalistic mix of basilectal and acrolectal features'.[532] Similarly, Devi has opted for a translation which situates itself at a crossroads, in-between authenticity and non-conformity. Her broken syntax, in which prepositions have disappeared, her choice of verbal tenses, lexemes and repetitions all contribute to a certain orality and hybridity, as the following extracts highlight:

> Me no Madrasi, me is nigger… me no Madrasi…' she jeered in a high-pitched voice as if imitating a parrot. […] 'Out-out,' she shouted after him, slapping the stick wilfully against her side as if whipping a mule, 'haul your stinkness from my yard before I coolie your backside. Next time you call my man coolie is the last time you preserve teeth and tongue in your mouth, you hear? What is you but always a nigger?' [533]

> - Je suis pas Madras, je suis pas Madras… » répéta Miriam d'une voix perçante comme si elle imitait un perroquet. […]
>
> « Dehors, dehors ! cria-t-elle, tapant le bâton contre sa propre jambe comme si elle fouettait un mulet. Prends ta *pourriture* et va-t'en *avant je coolie ton derrière*. *Prochaine fois tu* appelles mon homme Coolie, c'est dernière fois tu auras les dents et la langue dans ta bouche, tu entends ? Tu *seras jamais* rien d'autre qu'un Nègre, tu entends ? » [534]

Elements that have been underlined illustrate the creolization at work in Devi's translation. She abolishes syntactical hierarchies with the disappearance of the relative pronoun 'que' in 'la prochaine fois [que]' and 'avant [que]', echoes Dabydeen's recategorizations with the mirror use of the verb 'coolie' in French, switches to the future tense with 'tu seras jamais' and reasserts the contaminating effects of the vernacular through the term 'pourriture' ('stinkness'), which adds a flavour of rottenness to the

[532] Batchelor and Bisdorff, *Intimate Enemies: Translation in Francophone Contexts*, p. 220.
[533] Dabydeen, *The Counting House*, pp. 78–79.
[534] Dabydeen, *Terres maudites*, p. 126. Emphasis mine.

whole. Thus, Devi consciously steps over the threshold of creolization, adding in elements that offer direct comments on the tensions between one language and another. Where the source text reads, in another instance, '"And all your coolie words don't cow me neither, chala, haal, backna, and all that paganness […]"'[535], the French reads as follows: '« Et toutes tes paroles coolies me font pas peur non plus, *chala, haal, backna*, tous ces mots païens. […] ».'[536] Once again, the italics may mark the Hindu words as sacred terms, but only to be immediately renegotiated as profane elements in the apposition that follows. The ethnic tensions between labourers of Indian and African origins thus find their most powerful representation in language, as is epitomized by the gloss 'pagan *words*' in the translation. If Devi's work may be judged transgressive, it is not so much to question Dabydeen's authority, but perhaps rather as an attempt to offer a parallel deconstruction of linguistic and cultural norms in the French version. Through her subtle and more visible creations, both in the text and in its interstitial spaces, Devi calls for a decentring of publishing practices in the French metropole. Through translation, both versions of the novel enter a liminal space that is guided by a 'third code' which is not run by exoticizing or foreignizing principles, but rather by overlapping strategies of creolization in which binary opposites dissolve.[537] It could therefore be argued that Devi's own position as a Mauritian East Indian woman can be felt in *Terres maudites*. Yet, it does not subdue Dabydeen's treatment of inter-ethnic tensions observed in *The Counting House*, despite a few instances of 'de-caribbeanisation', nor does it transpose Guyanese realities onto a strictly-speaking Mauritian background. In fact, a certain emphasis on the Guyanese landscape pervades the plot, as allusions to some plants and animals indicate, notably in the translation where a few footnotes explicitly locate the setting in the Caribbean.[538] Yet,

[535] Dabydeen, *The Counting House* p. 85.
[536] Dabydeen, *Terres maudites*, p. 137.
[537] As pointed out by Bandia in *Translation as Reparation*, 'hybridity raises questions about the very notion of a "foreign text" or the original, and its implied status as the starting point of a translation. It also draws attention to the relationship between the original and its translation, raising questions about the extent to which the translation is governed by the original. Other issues are also put to the test, such as the implied hierarchy or diglossic relation between languages, and the translation of what is essentially a linguistically multi-layered or translated source text into another language.' (p. 9). The expression 'third code' also appears in his introduction (p. 6).
[538] The footnote to 'kiskidee' read as follows: 'Oiseau de la Guyane qui doit son nom à son cri caractéristique'. The footnote goes beyond simple classification here, seeking to explain the origins of the bird's name, which by phonetic association, could almost read as 'Qu'est-ce qu'il dit?'. Dabydeen, *Terres maudites*, p. 138.

other references to Caribbean plants are simply marked by italics without further references, as is the case with '*kaita*' or '*pik*'.[539] This call away from systematic domestication gives in turn free rein to the reader, whose imagination and mental representations are favoured over topographical exactness and relocation.[540]

Overall, thanks to the various techniques at work in *Terres maudites*, which at times draw on footnotes, at others on internal references through connotations, context and sounds, Devi's translation reminds us of the importance of distinguishing creolization from *créolité* when focusing, for example, on the East Indian experience.[541] Similarly, the next sections of this chapter will draw on concepts that have emerged from Reunionese and Pacific Ocean thought to show how translation both reveals the un-assimilability of the specificities of each region but also helps preserve the (fragile) interconnectedness they share.

6.2. Of moorings and 'amarres' between islands and continents

Amarres
en créole réunionnais,
terme profondément polysémique,
signifie aussi bien

lien, attache,
envoûtement, ensorcellement,
être amoureux, être captivé,
*être en relation, se soucier (*amar lë ker*)*
*ce qui excite les sens (*i amar la boush*)*
(et bien d'autres choses encore…)[542]

[539] *Ibid*., p. 146.
[540] Dabydeen, *The Counting House*, p. 110; *Terres maudites*, p. 182.
[541] In her conclusion to *Transoceanic Dialogues*, Bragard insists on this point: 'It is my contention that coolitude actively participates not in Créolité that is now increasingly associated with an aesthetic and even ideological project but more largely in creolization (too often associated with Africanness) and more importantly perhaps in the necessary pluralizing of hybridity discourses.' Bragard, *Transoceanic Dialogues: Coolitude in Caribbean and Indian Ocean Literatures*, p. 249.
[542] Françoise Vergès, Carpanin Marimoutou, *Amarres: Créolisations india-océanes* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005), title page.

This section turns to literary trajectories between the Caribbean and Africa from the angle of translation, taking as its starting point the figure of one translator, Sika Fakambi, who received critical acclaim for her translation of Parkes's *Tail of the Blue Bird*, rendered into French as *Notre quelque part*, as already mentioned. This work will be commented upon in connection to its sub-liminal[543] translational content, before Fakambi's translation of Kamau Brathwaite's *Negus* is examined. Building upon the polysemic notion of 'amarres', introduced in the epigraph above, the present section is going to show how translation can reveal sub-liminal connections between marginalized literary spheres that resist assimilation into mainstream cultures and can enhance, rather than erase, the centrality of corporeality, and particularly of the voice typical of Caribbean and African oralitures.[544]

6.2.1. Echoing the tidalectics of sound in translation

The French translation of Parkes's *Tail of the Blue Bird* was published in 2014 by Zulma, a publisher that specializes in 'Littératures du Monde Entier' and advocates an archipelagic mode of reading, as its cross-cultural, worldwide range of authors attests to. On their webpage dedicated to Parkes's novel, Zulma indicates how the text has circulated on the global scale, mentioning other editions and translations of the novel.[545] This page also contains a glossary of African terms and expressions that does not feature in the printed novel, but invites the reader to further familiarize him/herself with the world depicted in *Notre quelque part*, and extend the reading experience beyond the book as an

[543] The term suggests a higher degree of distance between text and off-text, as what is usually characterised as paratext, in other words what immediately surrounds the text, is here located at a greater remove from the actual book object. See 6.2.1. for more details.

[544] About Europhone African writers and the orality of their writing, Bandia notes the following: 'Using European languages to express an African world view violates the intimate link between language and culture. A gap is created between African thought and its natural medium of expression. To compensate for this gap, African writers do not have to mimic their Western counterparts, nor do they have to abandon writing in the colonial languages which were given to them by uncontrollable historical circumstances. Rather, they should use these erstwhile imperial languages in such a way as to attempt to re-establish that intimate relationship between language and culture. To do so, they will have to adapt the European language to African sociocultural reality, which is the nexus of their writing.' Bandia, *Translation as Reparation*, p. 25.

[545] < http://www.zulma.fr/livre-notre-quelque-part-572086.html > [accessed 29 August 2017]

object.[546] The glossary opens with a brief explanation of various phonemes from the African vernacular that were kept in the French translation, twi, but reads differently from the 'pseudo-phonetics' found in the English version of Santiago's autobiography,[547] inasmuch as the references here point to sounds reproduced in the novel using the International Phonetic Alphabet. The effect is that the reader encounters at first (possibly) unknown phonetic signs in the text, such as [Ɛ], [ŋ] or [Ɔ], which are explained as transcriptions in the online glossary, but are not flagged or marked off as foreign in the novel itself and do not suggest mimicry (as could be argued in the case of Santiago's novel). Rather, the emphasis is laid on sounds and the impossibility, in some instances, to find a corresponding element in the French language.[548] It is no coincidence then that the ensuing glossary entries provide information on African proverbs, sayings, interjections, metaphors and emphatic locutions, among other references, to emphasize the proximity between sound and meaning in the vernacular used in the novel.[549] In some instances, the *lexique* also establishes broader connections between African, Caribbean and American folktales. This is the case, for example, with the following entry:

> *Ananse*, *Kwaku Ananse* : Ananse le farceur est l'un des personnages de contes les plus importants de la mythologie akan, et plus largement des mythologies d'Afrique de l'Ouest et des Caraïbes. Les contes d'Ananse seraient originaires de la culture akan du Ghana, le mot « ananse » désignant l'araignée en langue akan. Ces contes ont essaimé en Afrique (c'est le

[546] The *lexique* is introduced in such a way that it lays emphasis on the relationship between the reader and the characters of the plot, rather than on the (possibly) geographical, ethnographic realities about Ghana: 'Pour en apprendre davantage sur l'univers singulier et envoûtant de Yao Poku et de Kayo, vous pouvez télécharger le lexique de *Notre quelque part* en cliquant ici.' *Ibid*.

[547] See p. 161.

[548] See for example, '« ŋ » transcrit un son consonantique rare que ne possède pas le français, il s'agit d'une consonne occlusive nasale rétroflexe voisée'. < http://www.zulma.fr/datas/up/files/lexique-notre_quelque_part-janvier-2014.pdf> [accessed 24 Septembre 2016]

[549] Note the following examples: 'Agooo : interjection signifiant « faites place », « attention » ; employée dans la rue, et lorsqu'on veut manifester sa présence à l'entrée d'une habitation, en présence ou en l'absence de porte – par exemple, lorsque seule une natte de raphia ou un pagne masque l'entrée', 'Akasanoma : « oiseau parleur » ; nom donné à la radio', 'Been-to : au Ghana, personne revenue au pays après avoir passé du temps dans un pays occidental, pour étudier, travailler, etc.' or again 'Sɛbi : expression équivalant à « n'est-ce pas », « vois-tu », « voyez-vous », utilisée lorsqu'on est en train de parler de choses embarrassantes, gênantes, de choses dont on n'a pas envie de parler ou dont on n'est pas censé parler'. *Ibid*.

> Kacou Ananzé d'Afrique francophone), dans les Caraïbes, et ailleurs.[550]

The concept of pollination used here to describe the transoceanic connections around the figure of Ananse (and its multiple variants) beyond the African continent allows Parkes's text and its French version to 'circulate' beyond Europe and resonate with other continental and insular spaces from across the world ('dans les Caraïbes et ailleurs'). In fact, Fakambi's subsequent translations for Zulma[551] attest to her role as a transcultural agent. In 'Translation North and South: Composing the Translator's Archive', María Constanza Gúzman argues that '[t]ranslators are responsible for the travelling of narratives across languages and territories', and that '[t]ranslation is thus a part of a continuum of cultural production where the translator plays a key role as a social agent'.[552] If Gúzman focuses primarily on Latin American literature in her work, her observation is nonetheless relevant beyond the region and applies in particular to Fakambi's own role as multicultural *passeur* in the contemporary Francophone literary scene. Since her recognition by the French literary establishment as a translator of Anglophone postcolonial or 'marginal' authors, Fakambi has been considered an expert on such literature and her own origins as 'une enfant du Bénin' have consistently been brought to the fore.[553] More recently, Fakambi has become the head of an imprint published by *Éditions Isabelle Sauvage* which is dedicated to reproducing pan-African voices and was aptly named *corp/us*. The imprint is presented as follows on the publisher's website:

> corp/us prend corps en voix; s'écrit en plis de paroles se déployant, incarnées, sonores; existe dans ces gestes de langue

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[550] < http://www.zulma.fr/datas/up/files/lexique-notre_quelque_part-janvier-2014.pdf> [accessed 25 September 2016]

[551] She has since then translated two collections of short-stories for Zulma, *Snapshots – Nouvelles voix du Caine* Prize (2014) and A. Igoni Barrett's *Love is Power ou quelque chose comme ça* (2015).

[552] María Constanza Gúzman, 'Translation North and South: Composing the Translator's Archive', *TTR: traduction, terminologie, rédaction*, 26, 2 (2013), 171–191 (p. 172).

[553] See her interview for *Page Publique*, available on Zulma's website, in which she confirms her interest in literatures of the margins: 'Oui, j'ai entamé un cursus d'études canadiennes, et peu à peu cette exploration intuitive des marges de la littérature anglophone (par opposition aux « centres » que seraient la Grande-Bretagne et les États-Unis, largement prépondérants, me semble-t-il, dans les département d'études anglophones des universités françaises que j'ai fréquentées), m'a ramenée vers l'Afrique de l'Ouest, et plus particulièrement vers les auteurs émergents de l'aire anglophone.' <http://www.zulma.fr/datas/up/files/place_publique.pdf> [accessed 15 August 2017]

> s'accomplissant entre les langues, au vif du dire. corp/us rêve une sphère déboussolée où se dessinerait une nouvelle cartographie de l'être – déplacé – au monde.[554]

The format of the texts published in the series testifies to Fakambi's commitment to giving back their voice and texture to those literary creations in their French version. Each edition is therefore composed of a booklet with a note from the translator (in most cases Fakambi herself), the printed version of the poem selected for publication, a CD on which both the original and the translation can be heard, as well as a poster that offers yet another sensory translation of the text, this time in visual terms. Kamau Brathwaite's *Negus* features among the titles published in the series.

Brathwaite's poetry has by and large been very little translated, apart from a few notable exceptions.[555] This lack of translation is, however, a characteristic that Brathwaite shares with many other 'Anglophone Caribbean writers who decide to write in the various creoles, nation-languages and patwa of their countries', as pointed out by Jeremy Poynting, Managing Editor of Peepal Tree Press.[556] What is unique to the poet, though, is his personal use of fonts and typesets since the creation of his Sycorax Video Style in the early 1990s, which 'has increasingly connected "the sight of it" and "the sound of it," using foregrounded visual dimensions of the page in an attempt to "unsubmerge" the "noise" of nation language via the resources of the printed page'[557]. As such, *Strange Fruit* reproduces Brathwaite's performative style, using different typesets and font sizes, and includes references to and citations from the poet's former works. The collection also contains photographs and images for which copyright had to be secured by the publisher,

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[554] https://editionsisabellesauvage.wordpress.com/corpus/ [accessed 29 August 2017]

[555] See the bilingual editions of *The Arrivants/Die Ankömmlinge*, trans. by Rainer Epp (Bremen: Übersee-Museum, 1988) and *Los Danzantes del Tiempo: a Spanish/English Selection*, trans. by Adriana Gónzalez Mateos and Christopher Winks (La Habana: Casa Fondo Editorial Casa de Las Américas, 2011) or the monolingual translations of *Rights of Passage* into Sranantongo, *Primisi-ô*, trans. by D. France Olivieira (Paramaribo: Vaco Press, 1997) or the French translation of *DreamHaiti*, *RêvHaïti*, trans. by Christine Pagnoulle (Montreal: Mémoire d'encrier, 2013). This list does not include translations published in scholarly journals.

[556] Email exchange conducted on 14 September 2017 in which Jeremy Poynting kindly explained to me the importance for Kamau Brathwaite of preserving Caribbean writers' archives – including his own – in the face of what the author calls 'cultural lynching'. See Kamau Brathwaite, *Strange Fruit* (Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2016).

[557] Mandy Bloomfield, *Archaeopoetics: Word, Image, History* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2016), p. 160.

an aspect of Brathwaite's work that can, ultimately, complicate if not altogether compromise publication. *Negus*, a poem initially published in 1969, came before Brathwaite's Sycorax VS.[558] Yet, the use of the various fonts and letterings of disproportionate size and colour on the graphic reproduction of *Negus*, inserted in the form of a *poème-affiche* in the 'book object' – which resembles more a CD case than an actual book – dialogues with the author's visual style.[559] The superimposition of some characters over others suggests a quasi simultaneous repetition or layering of sounds, as in the leitmotiv 'Ça, ça, ça, ça n'est pas', which, in the audio version of the poem is rendered by the juxtaposed readings of *Negus* in English by Brathwaite and in French by Fakambi.[560] In her introduction to Brathwaite's works, Fakambi signals the poet's wish to (re)create a 'nation language' in his texts and insists on the oral dimension of this language:

> Hantée par la catastrophe humaine que représente la traite négrière transatlantique, sa poésie invente ce qu'il appelle une « langue nation », travaillée par les langues africaines et caraïbes, mais aussi par le spoken word, les rythmes du jazz et du folk, les innovations linguistiques et typographiques. […] Une langue et une écriture qui exigent du lecteur, par tous les sens, une attention aigue au dire du poème.[561]

In turn, the written text is itself reproduced in small print in a booklet whose format reminds the reader of the written material inserted within a CD case where (s)he can read the lyrics of the track at leisure whilst listening to them. The poem itself starts with a description of the *lwà Lègbá*[562] entering the premises of a vodoun ceremony, but soon turns into an incantation dedicated to the power of the word:

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[558] See Kamau Brathwaite, *Islands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

[559] The *poème-affiche* by graphic designer Florence Boudet can be found at the end of the thesis, see Appendix. My gratitude goes out to *Éditions Isabelle Sauvage* for their kind permission to reproduce this work.

[560] See track 1 of the CD, 'lectures croisées'. Kamau Brathwaite, *Negus*, trans. by Sika Fakambi (Plounéour-Ménez: Éditions Isabelle Sauvage, 2017). This audio version first appeared alongside both printed versions of the poem (by Brathwaite and Fakambi) in *Retors* and can be accessed at <http://retors.net/spip.php?article475> [accessed 1 October 2017]

[561] *Ibid* (no page number indicated in the booklet).

[562] The booklet contains endnotes in which 'lwá' and 'lègbá' are explained for the French reader. The note for 'lègbá' reads as follows: 'esprit ou divinité de la croisée des Chemins, premier lwá invoqué et honoré au début de tout ritual vodoun, parce que c'est lui qui détient les clés qui permettent de communiquer avec le monde des esprits; c'est lui qui « ouvre la barrière ».'

I must be given words to shape my name to the syllables of trees	Je dois recevoir le don des mots pour modeler mon nom sur les syllabes des arbres
I must be given words to refashion futures like a healer's hand	Je dois recevoir le don des mots pour refaçonner les avenirs comme une main de guérisseur
I must be given words so that the bees in my blood's buzzing brain of memory will make flowers, will make flocks of birds will make sky, will make heaven	Je dois recevoir les don des mots afin que les abeilles dans le sang de mon cerveau vrombissant de mémoire fassent les fleurs, fassent les volées d'oiseaux, fassent le ciel, fassent les cieux[563]

Here, the persona is invested with the *gift* of the spoken word, as the translation repeatedly highlights ('le don des mots'). The personal note opening the text on the front page of the booklet in which the translator reveals that she transposed the poem by ear – her first approach to the work was through sound, not sight – reinforces this particular translational choice as Fakambi acknowledges her own 'gift' to Brathwaite: 'Traduire ce poème à l'oreille, j'ai fait cela pour donner à Kamau Brathwaite ce duo de nos voix disant ensemble *Negus*.'[564] Contrary to Ignacio Infante who sees limitations in the printed version(s) of Brathwaite's original digital creation known as the Sycorax VS,[565] this

[563] Brathwaite, *Negus*.

[564] *Ibid*.

[565] 'As experienced by readers of Brathwaite's SycoraxVS, the medium itself, in its available printed form, constitutes a mere visual record of its original digital form, in fact losing its intrinsic virtual temporality and deterritorialized mode of archival memory, something that could be avoided if published in various modes of digital media, such as the World Wide Web. More important, Brathwaite's decision to de-digitize SycoraxVS by exclusively publishing his work in traditional print format has not only done away with the intrinsic virtuality and rootlessness of the digital medium but has also eliminated the productive positionality symbolically embodied in the computer's cursor. It is precisely Brathwaite's original recognition of this creative potential of the computer's digital cursor as "prospero's curser" (*Ancestors*, 449) for the vernacular rearticulation of Caribbean culture that is virtually lost in the published version of SycoraxVS.' Ignacio Infante, 'The Digital Vernacular: "Groundation" and the Temporality of Translation in the Postcolonial Caribbean

section has attempted to show how an intermedial translation of his poems, which includes visual as well as oral/aural elements of experience, can illustrate what the author has elsewhere called the 'tidalectics'[566] of Caribbean aesthetics. In fact, the non-linear, backward-forward, forward-backward movement of the tide is omnipresent in all three recordings of the poem,[567] in which the different levels of pitch, the silences and sentence breaks interrupt and renegotiate the regular flow of diction. Similarly, as has been pointed out, the *poème-affiche* plays with the irregularities of font, size and color to (re)create a new conceptual space of expression for the poem.

It should be pointed out, however, that imprints such as *corp/us* remain on the whole rather limited, as they typically rely on (fairly) short print-runs and address a specific niche of readers, which can be inferred from the types of selling partners the publishers rely on.[568] In the case of Fakambi, it seems however that her recognition by the French literary establishment as a translator with first-hand knowledge and experience of Africa has helped her promote pan-African literature. As was the case with Devi, one may wonder, then, if the translator's voice can only ring 'true' if his/her own background shares common roots with the author's, as the peritext stressing such similarities doubtless suggests. This point is of crucial importance in the case of Caribbean literature as it begs the question of an inter-connectedness between voices from the region and from insular as well as continental spaces from elsewhere, an inter-connectedness that occurs precisely through the act of translation but remains overall little seen, let alone studied.

6.2.2. Submarine unity or sub-unities?

Creolization is a concept often found and investigated in connection with Caribbean literature. Yet, as will be pointed out, the concept, which entails a process of

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Poetics of Kamau Brathwaite', in *After Translation: The Transfer and Circulation of Modern Poetics Across the Atlantic* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), pp. 146–176 (p. 175).

[566] See chapter 1, p. 29, where the term was introduced.

[567] The first recording juxtaposes the two versions of the poem, while the second and third tracks of the CD offer the author and the translator's separate readings respectively.

[568] Small, independent bookstores traditionally act as relays for publishers like *Isabelle Sauvage Éditions*, at least in metropolitan France. See the display windows of bookstores promoting the publisher's imprint: <https://editionsisabellesauvage.wordpress.com/corpus/> [accessed 2 September 2017]

transformation, unlike *créolité* (creoleness) which refers to a specific literary movement and group of thinkers,[569] requires a specific cultural and linguistic (re)anchoring in order to be relational. To Glissant creolization entails a form of reconnection with a subliminal *langage* that overcomes the limits of the various *langues* spoken in the Caribbean and beyond:

> […] « l'unité est sous-marine ». Référence à la traite, lieu commun des peuples caribéens, et aux Africains jetés à la mer, lestés de boulets, depuis les ponts des bateaux négriers. Cet « enfoui » de l'unité révèle et signale que le rapport entre les composantes de la réalité caraïbe n'est pas seulement rationnel ou logique mais d'abord subliminal, à découvrir, en transformation permanente. Pour exprimer cela, que nous partageons entre nous multilingues, le langage importe ici, qui dévie les limites des langues utilisées.[570]

If Glissant's concept of the *Tout-Monde* has gained particular currency in Francophone and Anglophone academic circles, it is important to note that the translation of his theoretical works, mostly by Michael J. Dash and Betsy Wing, allows us to have special insight into some of the distinctions he establishes, for example, between *langage* and *langue* which are key to the concept of creolization. In her translation of *Poétique de la Relation*, Wing opts for a different translation than Dash before her with respect to the two terms. She argues the following in an endnote to the text:

> For Glissant, when these two words are set in contradistinction to each other, *langue* is the language one speaks and *langage* is how one speaks it. A *langue* may be a national language (French, Spanish, etc.) or an imposed language (French in Martinique) or a dominant language (Creole). A *langage* is a way of using language that can cross linguistic borders. Glissant shares a *langage* with writers who do not write in French: Derek Walcott, José Maria de Heredia, and Kamau Brathwaite, among others. […] In *Caribbean Discourse* Michael Dash renders this

[569] In the Francophone Caribbean alone, distinctions are made between *antillanité*, *créolité* and *guyanité* (see in particular Serge Patient's definition of *guyanité* as opposed to *antillanité* in his interview with Kathleen Gyssels from 7 April 2002, available on the website *île en île* < http://ile-en-ile.org/serge-patient-rencontre-avec-serge-patient/> [accessed 2 August 2017]. In the Hispanophone Caribbean, a distinction is also made between antillanidad and caribeñidad. See in particular Edgardo Rodríguez Julía, "Puerto Rico y el Caribe", *El Nuevo Día*, San Juan, Sunday 20 November 1998, p. 7, cited in María Julia Daroqui, *(Dis)locaciones: Narrativas híbridas del Caribe hispano* (Valencia: Universitat de València, 1998), p. 12.

[570] Édouard Glissant, *Traité du Tout-Monde* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1997), p. 76.

> distinction as "language" and "self-expression." It is perhaps an expression of Glissant's *langage* that he prefers to see the distinctions marked by composite words that indicate their fundamental connection; my translation of these words when they are set in this relation are language-voice (for *langue*) and language-use (for *langage*).[571]

The idea of further developing a composite language when translating Glissant's (theoretical) work in English is of particular interest here, as it can be articulated with the poetics of creolization introduced by Françoise Vergès and Carpanin Marimoutou in *Amarres*. As the epigraph opening this chapter shows, the term *amarres* has several context-specific meanings when encountered in a Reunionese setting.[572] If the noun keeps its general meaning of 'moorings' in French as well as in Creole, it also dialogues with Glissant's philosophy ('être en relation' in the case of 'amar lë ker') and, to a larger extent, reminds us of religious practices observed in the Caribbean, in which the term *amarre* is used to refer to a spell, as previously mentioned.[573] However, the term also has different meanings depending on its original Creole, Reunionese Creole differing from any other Francophone Creole spoken in the Antilles or elsewhere.[574] In that sense, Wing's translational strategy, which consists in underlining the 'fundamental connection' of words whilst respecting their intrinsic difference – *langue* and *langage* being in correspondence, yet not interchangeable equivalents – could be interpreted as a recognition and an illustration of the tidalectics at work between the different areas of the

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[571] Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. by Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), p. 217.

[572] See page 188.

[573] See 3.2.1. and my brief analysis of Mayra Montero's *Del Rojo de su sombra*.

[574] This point is of utmost importance to Vergès and Marimoutou, as well as to other Reunionese thinkers and scholars: 'Le créole n'étant pas une langue nationale dans ce département français [la Réunion], on n'y assiste pas, contrairement à ce que l'on a vu dans des pays indépendants comme Maurice depuis 1968 ou les Seychelles depuis 1976, à un mouvement institutionnalisé de traduction des textes relevant du panthéon littéraire « universel ». Dans ces îles, les nécessités de fixer des normes graphiques et d'instrumentaliser la nouvelle langue officielle ont eu pour conséquence de l'équiper également sur un plan littéraire à travers la traduction et l'adaptation de grands « classiques » : théâtre shakespearien ou *Mahābhārata* profondément transformés par Dev Virahsawmy à Maurice ; textes occidentaux ou africains francophones ou anglophones (Camus, Hemingway, Shakespeare, Laye, Achebe…) aux Seychelles. Si traduire devient un acte pédagogique, le projet est surtout symbolique. La traduction-adaptation vise à montrer que le créole a une portée universelle, et que les îles ont leur place dans le concert des nations : « Kestion kréol : kestion politik » rappelle Alain Armand.' Valérie Magdelaine-Andrianjafitrimo, 'Translations, déplacements et transferts interculturels: ce que les bruissements des mémoires font aux littératures de la Réunion', in *Translating the Postcolonial in Multilingual Contexts – Traduire le postcolonial en contexte multilingue*, ed. by Judith Misrahi-Barak and Srilata Ravi (Montpellier: Presses Universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2017), pp. 71–94 (p. 76).

Caribbean on the one hand, and between the Caribbean and other insular spaces, in the Indian Ocean or even the Pacific, on the other hand. Wing's own incursion in Glissant's original paratext, signalled by a reference to the translator in the endnote, suggests that thick translation[575] functions in this case as a relational prosthesis to the text, inasmuch as the reader is provided with additional information supposed to help him/her contextualize historical and cultural information and make (non-linear) associations between them, much in the same vein as Glissant himself intended to do in the French version.[576] Here, both authorial and translational versions of *Poétique de la Relation* underscore and exemplify the subliminal links that connect peoples of the sea together, whilst acknowledging their intra and inter-regional differences. This last point is especially visible with respect to phenomena of creolization observed beyond the Caribbean. Vergès and Marimoutou call for an 'ethics of vigilance' when it comes to the term, '[b]ecause creolization is a historically, contextually, and regionally specific concept, one should use it as theoretical or critical metaphor with great prudence.'[577] Similarly, if this section argues in favor of a submarine unity between the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and Pacific islanders through acts of translation, it also wishes to show how untranslatability is a key component of such processes of creolization. Here, 'untranslatability' ought to be understood as the expression of an endless quest, a dynamic process of translation that is never completely achieved as it is not fixed once and for all due to the instability of meaning of a term depending on its insular context – *amarre* is a telling example. As Barbara Cassin puts it, the 'untranslatable is what one keeps on (not) translating'[578]. In that regard, the concept of moving islands or *etak* developed in the

[575] The term is borrowed from Kwame Anthony Appiah. See 'Thick Translation', in *Callaloo*, 16:4 (1993), 808–819.

[576] In her introduction to *Poetics of Relation*, Wing observes the following: 'Throughout the body of his work Glissant has combined the discipline of analytical thought with a determined refusal to accept the logic of linear sequences as the only productive logic. […] The structure of *Poetics of Relation* is based more on associative principles than on any steady progress toward irrefutable proof; it is an enactment of its own poetics. Providing a sense of the new relations created in its language as a whole – its transforming ecology – was the greatest challenge for an American English version.' Betsy Wing, 'Translator's Introduction', in Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, p. xii.

[577] Vergès and Marimoutou, *Amarres: Créolisations india-océanes*, p. 23.

[578] 'To speak of *untranslatables* in no way implies that the terms in question, or the expressions, the syntactical or grammatical turns, are not and cannot be translated: the untranslatable is rather what one keeps on (not) translating. […] It is a sign of the way in which, from one language to another, neither the words nor the

Pacific region contributes to enriching transoceanic dialogues and has already been the object of cross-cultural readings with the Caribbean, as *etak* promotes a dynamic, tidalectic alternative to a linear model of exchange and circulation.[579] I would further argue that the concept enriches the principle of untranslatability insofar as it reminds us of the importance of the subliminal links shared by the various insular spaces under study, but it also reveals that each locality is grounded in a particular geographical, historical and cultural setting which cannot be superimposed onto one another, be they part of the same region or not. This is particularly visible in the literary translations carried out in the Pacific region, notably by Jean Anderson, who translates from French into English (and vice-versa), and by the works of scholars specialising in the circulation of literature in the Anglophone and Francophone parts of the Pacific.[580] In those works, and particularly in the translations by Anderson and other specialists (often academics), the strategies deployed by translators vary in their approach, favouring resistance over easy access to the text in some cases or, on the contrary, relying on paratext and thick translation in other instances. [581] Whatever strategy the translator opts for, it remains apparent that these translations are (mostly) conducted from one European language into another,[582] but that within those texts, traces of indigenous languages seep through

conceptual networks can simply be superimposed.' *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*, ed. by Barbara Cassin, trans. by Steven Rendall, Christian Hubert, Jeffrey Mehlman, Nathaniel Stein and Michael Syrotinski (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. xvii.

[579] '[T]he etak concept of moving islands destabilizes the myth of isolation and renders the indigenous peoples of Oceania as active participants in the world historical process. The semantics of the canoe itself encode the body of the ancestors, providing a genealogical rendering of place as an alternative to colonial historiography in a way that is conceptually tied to the continuity of the social body. Moreover, the fluidity of the ocean allows for a dynamic mapping of social and political territory and a shared regional unity based on the decolonizing ideology of the Pacific Way.' Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey, *Routes and Roots: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific Island Literatures* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), p. 128.

[580] See in particular the works by Michelle Keown, which include (for a very limited selection), 'Littérature-monde or Littérature océanienne? Internationalism versus Regionalism in Francophone Pacific Writing', in *Transnational French Studies: Postcolonialism and Littérature-monde*, ed. by Alec G. Hargreaves, Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), pp. 240–257, and ''Word of Struggle': The Politics of Translation in Indigenous Pacific Literature', in *Language and Translation in Postcolonial Literatures: Multilingual Contexts, Translational Texts*, ed. by Simona Bertacco (New York, London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 145–164.

[581] Michelle Keown, ''Word of Struggle': The Politics of Translation in Indigenous Pacific Literature', in *Language and Translation in Postcolonial Literatures: Multilingual Contexts, Translational Texts*, ed. by Simona Bertacco (New York, London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 145–164 (p. 149).

[582] Keown comments on this point and explains it as follows: 'The development of orthographies (largely by European missionaries and linguists during and beyond the nineteenth century) has given rise to a corpus of

'mainstream' French or English. Anderson's presentation of Chantal Spitz's *Island of Shattered Dreams*, which was the first Tahitian novel to be published in French and then translated into English, insists on what she calls the 'un-French writing' of the author:

> As a Mā'ohi writing in French, the language of her schooling, the language of the colonial power, Spitz finds herself in a position all too familiar to indigenous peoples the world over. Her solution is to radically disrupt many of the parameters of accepted literary French, and to reach beyond French, through French, perhaps, to reclaim some of the powerful and beautiful traditions of ancestral rhetoric.[583]

In order to reproduce a similar *écart*[584] between English and 'un-English' in her translation, Anderson refuses to explain away each and every Mā'ohi (foreignizing) element present in Spitz's version. The English translation does provide a glossary at the end of the volume, but the re-edition of the novel by *Au Vent des Îles* in French does so as well, and perhaps in an even more didactic way as it provides the reader with complementary information on how to pronounce Tahitian words and the entries contain lengthier explanations than in the English version overall.[585] Joint translations of New-Zealand writer Patricia Grace by Anderson and French-native speakers for *Au Vent des Îles*, the Tahiti-based French publisher who devotes a section of their activity to Pacific writing, similarly seem to favour strategies that call attention to untranslatability rather than transparency. In the preface to *Des petits trous dans le silence*, Anne Magnan-Park presents the strategy she used in her translation of Grace's short-stories:

> Je n'ai pas tenté d'expliquer les mille et une références culturelles pour lesquelles je ne peux fournir de notes infrapaginales sans transformer ma traduction en ouvrage universitaire. J'ai

written material in many of these [indigenous] languages, but colonial incursions into the region frequently resulted in imperial metropolitan languages becoming the main vehicles of communication and publication, with the establishment of separate Anglophone, Francophone and Hispanophone enclaves. *Ibid*., p. 149.

583 Jean Anderson, 'Translator's Note', in Chantal Spitz, *Island of Shattered Dreams*, trans. by Jean Anderson (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2007).

584 The term is borrowed from Glissant, which he defines thus: 'l'écart – qui n'est pas l'exclusion mais le dépassement réalisé d'une différence.' Édouard Glissant, *Poétique de la Relation*, p. 96.

585 See the opening section of the 'glossaire des mots tahitiens (et autres)' in the French (re)edition: 'Dans la transcription usuelle de la langue tahitienne, les voyelles se prononcent comme en espagnol (a, é, i, o, ou) et elles se prononcent toutes. *Aue* : a-ou-é. Les voyelles doubles sont le plus souvent séparées par un coup de glotte (apostrophe) qui ne se note pas toujours : Faa'a devrait s'écrire Fa'a'a et se prononcer Fa-a-a.' Chantal Spitz, *L'Île des rêves écrasés*, 2nd edn (Pirae, Tahiti: Au Vent des Îles, 2007), e-book.

> cependant inclus un bref glossaire qui, bien qu'il ne figure pas dans le recueil original, me permet néanmoins de ne pas avoir à gloser sur des notions familières ou accessibles à beaucoup de Néo-zélandais.[586]

Although the majority of readers targeted by *Au Vent des Îles* may arguably be Pacific islanders or readers familiar with the area,[587] this quote shows that intra-regional linguistic and cultural differences persist between North and South Pacific, a situation which, to the translator, justifies the presence of a glossary for Francophone readers who are not necessarily metropolitan. Keown has a point in her contrastive study of literary translational practices across the Pacific, when she observes that the traces and, in some instance, more visible marks of indigenous languages in both source and translated texts constitute the essence of the 'transcendental quality [of those works which] pose a challenge to the dominance of the two 'metropolitan' languages'[588]. What then unites those literatures from one end of the Pacific to the other, or from one ocean to another, are the sub-liminal (submarine or transoceanic) links they entertain with each other, as well as the sub-liminal (subterranean, hence opaque) messages they send to the conflicting currents of an otherwise globalized sea of 'creolization'[589].

6.2.3. Selective moorings: mapping local resistance to master narratives

Most of the case studies presented throughout the chapter have been proof of intra-regional translations, especially in the context of Pacific writing, where Anglophone and Francophone texts have been published locally. On a more general level, transoceanic examples of literary circulation in translation tend to be the result of global exchanges, inasmuch as publishers traditionally based in North America or Europe regularly

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[586] Anne Magnan-Park, 'Préface', in Patricia Grace, *Des petits trous dans le silence*, trans. by Anne Magnan-Park (Pirae, Tahiti: Au Vent des Îles, 2014), p. 10.

[587] The publisher is based in Tahiti and features a wide-range of books on the Pacific. In their mission statement, they emphasize their interest in Pacific and Oceania literatures and cultures. It is however interesting to note that more than half of their volumes, including their imprint promoting Pacific literature, is available in e-books. See <http://www.auventdesiles.pf/qui-sommes-nous/> [accessed 30 August 2017]

[588] *Ibid*., p. 158.

[589] The term is used in inverted commas as it aims to criticize the absence of 'ethics of vigilance' observed sometimes in the use (and abuse) of creolization.

commission or accept translations of works by so-called peripheral writers. In the context of literary translations published in insular spaces such as the Mascarene Islands or the Pacific, further studies need to be conducted in order to assess the reception of those works. In her study of (self-) translated texts from French into Creole by Reunionese writers, including translations of French classics by Molière and La Fontaine, Magdelaine-Andrianjafitrimo notes the limited impact of such publications, often restricted, paradoxically, to elite audiences, despite the very fact that such works aim at the circulation of popular literary genres in the local vernacular.[590] With regard to the Pacific, Anderson raises identical concerns: '[o]ne of the thorniest and (perhaps understandably) least discussed [questions] is indisputably the issue of readership – who reads the translations, and how might translators' or publishers' perceptions of these readers influence decisions made during the translation process?'[591]. She argues in favour of a case-by-case approach, which at times relies on opacity and resistance to mainstream narratives (implying little or no translational thresholds whatsoever), at others privileges paratextual prostheses as long as they preserve the original effects of the minor voice(s) heard in the original text. In either case, the locality of the text, when considered in either its original or translated versions, is maintained throughout its circulation, despite the linguistic modifications it undergoes. In that sense, studying translational processes from the angle of transoceanic movements allows us to (re)assess the translator (and publisher)'s interventions in the text as strategies that invite us to understand translation as a system of 'dynamic equivalence[s]'[592], or better yet, of dynamic 'correspondences'.

[590] 'En réalité, dans le champ des « littératures-monde », ce jeu de résistance et de réappropriation reste largement absent. Le théâtre des langues reste en effet souvent muet pour la critique et le lectorat. Les textes strictement créolophones ne sont pas traduits pour être diffusés en dehors de l'île. Ils restent internes et peu lus, réservés paradoxalement à un usage élitiste beaucoup plus que populaire, malgré l'image que véhicule la langue.' Magdelaine-Andrianjafitrimo, 'Translations, déplacements et transferts interculturels: ce que les bruissements des mémoires font aux littératures de la Réunion', p. 92.

[591] Jean Anderson, 'A Kumara by Any Other Name: Literary Translation in and of the Polynesian Pacific', in *Translating the Postcolonial in Multilingual Contexts – Traduire le postcolonial en contexte multilingue*, ed. by Judith Misrahi-Barak and Srilata Ravi (Montpellier: Presses Universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2017), pp. 21–38 (p. 24).

[592] 'Dynamic equivalence', to Nida, consists in ensuring that 'the message of the original text has been so transported into the receptor language that the *response* of the *receptor* is essentially like that of the original receptors'. Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation, with Special Reference to Bible Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), p. 200.

The possibility of creating a pan-Pacific, pan-Caribbean or pan-Indian community of readers can then be envisaged, all the more so as what remains at the heart of those literatures, what circulates beyond their initial linguistic borders (once again generally corresponding to a European language) is, precisely the sub-liminal or indigenous matter that runs through those narratives. Brathwaite calls this unifying substratum 'nation language' (in the context of the Caribbean). Glissant identifies it as *le langage*, in opposition to *la langue*, whilst Vergès and Marimoutou see in *les amarres* the perfect encapsulation for a creolization that means flow, motion and anchoring at the same time.[593] If each framework preserves in its own way its originality (and, to a certain extent, its 'origina*r*ity'), they all also remain open to a wider logic of the archipelago. Benítez-Rojo extends his own theorizing of the Caribbean to the concept of the meta-archipelago, which, culturally-speaking, implies no centre nor limits, 'a chaos within which there is an island that proliferates endlessly, each copy a different one, founding and refounding ethnological materials like a cloud will do with its vapo[u]r'[594]. Yet, as the limited number of literary translations actually produced both intra- and inter-regionally has shown, and as the even more restricted reception of those works has revealed in some instances, much needs to be done to defy the global, vertical routes of cultural circulation. In the meantime, one possible way of preserving minor identities when carrying across their specificity for global and/or regional audiences consists in relying on paratextual strategies:

> These translations might require a degree of 'thickness' (Appiah 1993) that not all publishers would welcome, but until such time as each translated work can readily be accompanied by hyperlinked explanatory material, a certain amount of paratextual 'intervention' on the part of the translator may be the only way 'to preserve the kumara' and to develop the necessary skills base for a true community of readers.[595]

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[593] 'La créolisation n'est pas un agrégat, une somme de différences. Elle se sait inachevée, soumise aux mutations, à la perte. Elle est emprunt, mimétique et créatrice. Elle ne craint pas de s'enraciner car pour elle la racine n'est pas nécessairement mortifère, si elle amarre pour mieux laisser partir. Pas d'idéalisation du mouvement, mais une intégration de la distance à la terre, au lieu, à l'autre. L'amarre est relation qui accepte le lien, qui ne craint pas d'être soumis aux sens, au désir, qui accepte le renoncement.' Vergès and Marimoutou, *Amarres: Créolisations india-océanes*, p. 57.

[594] Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, trans. by James Maraniss, 2nd edn (Durham, NC; London: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 9.

[595] Anderson, 'A Kumara by Any Other Name: Literary Translation in and of the Polynesian Pacific', p. 35.

Translational thresholds, when understood as sites of cultural preservation, as opposed to cultural assimilation, indicate an effort to resist master narratives that legitimize universal knowledge, at the risk, admittedly, of alienating some publishers (and readers) as suggested above. Other modalities, (re)integrating various sensory approaches to literature, such as sound and texture as seen with the works published in *corp/us*, can also be deemed viable options. What is furthermore apparent, when looking at the recent trajectories of transoceanic or archipelagic thought is the inevitable inclusion of landmasses and telluric realities that contribute to the enrichment of ongoing and future tidalectics. As DeLoughrey puts it,

> It is by insisting on the tidalectics between land and sea and by remapping the Caribbean and the Pacific [among other spaces] alongside each other that particular discourses of diaspora, indigeneity, and sovereignty can be examined in ways that challenge and complement each other, foregrounding the need for simultaneous attention to maritime routes and native roots.[596]

Similarly, when transposing the transoceanic imaginary onto transnational realities of literary circulation, continental routes of access to translated literature undoubtedly continue to dominate cultural exchanges, and as such must be integrated (if only to be renegotiated or cast aside) into the tidalectics of translation. The transoceanic expressions of creolization observed thus far can only be considered in their submerged phase – 'in the making', as it were, as the title of the chapter suggests –, at least inasmuch as this early stage of research allows me to state with respect to the pragmatic side of circulation. In fact, the screening processes at play behind the selection of titles published by insular or local presses, which generally reveal movements limited to regional exchanges, prove that the politics of translation continue to loom large whether by land or sea.

[596] DeLoughrey, *Routes and Roots: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific Island Literatures*, p. 6.

7. Towards a Caribbeanisation of transl/national practices in literary circulation

The effects of the global market on Caribbean literature have been assessed in various studies of the region's literary output, not least in relation to the precarious, at times ambivalent positioning that Caribbean writers entertain with mass consumption and cultural commodification.[597] Translations of Caribbean literature are in turn often fraught with sharp cultural tensions that can be addressed in the liminal, paratextual spaces of the works under study, or can be subdued and altogether erased when undergoing processes of assimilation and domestication to conform to the receptor culture. Furthermore, as has been argued by Pascale Casanova, the circulation of literature on the global market is characterized by an uneven flow of exchanges, whereby, on the one hand, some book markets translate very little whilst their own literary production is massively exported, and, on the other, 'peripheral' book markets are made up of a large portion of imported translations when they rarely export their own literature. Casanova illustrates the phenomenon of asymmetrical literary circulation through the image of 'the Greenwich meridian of literature', which she explains as follows:

> The unification of literary space through competition presumes the existence of a common standard for measuring time, an absolute point of reference unconditionally recognized by all contestants. It is at once a point in space, the center of all centers […], and a basis for measuring the time that is peculiar to literature. […] Literary space creates a present on the basis of which all positions can be measured, a point in relation to which all other points can be located. Just as the *fictive* line known as the prime meridian, arbitrarily chosen for the determination of longitude, contributes to the real organization of the world and makes possible the measure of distances and the location of positions on the surface of the earth, so what might be called the Greenwich meridian of literature makes it possible to estimate the relative aesthetic

[597] See, among others, Susan Roberson, *Essays: Exploring the Global Caribbean* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), or *Caribbean Literature in a Global Context*, ed. by Funso Aiyejina and Paula Morgan (San Juan, Trinidad & Tobago: Lexicon, 2006).

> distance from the center of the world of letters of all those who belong to it.[598]

Judging by the history of its literary production alone, the Caribbean would seem, at first, to situate itself at the intersection of global and local publishing initiatives. Whilst it undoubtedly relies on international publishers for its mainstream diffusion (and subsequent translation), Caribbean literature nonetheless also circulates on a local, regional level, thanks to small, independent publishing houses that have emerged in the archipelago and in some Caribbean territories.[599] However, if translation contributes to the transnational traffic of literature worldwide, in the case of the Caribbean, the paucity of intra-regional translational enterprises, with the notable exception, perhaps, of Cuba,[600] attests to the stranglehold that the 'Greenwich meridian(s) of literature' still exert(s) over the region. This observation seems all the more verified as the majority of Caribbean authors who have been translated sold the rights of their work to metropolitan publishers often located at a (great) remove from Caribbean realities. Jamaican writer Marlon James's recent *A Brief History of the Seven Killings* is a case in point. The novel was originally published by Oneworld Publications in 2014 in the UK and by Riverhead Books (a division of Penguin Group) in the USA and translation rights were subsequently acquired by various prominent European publishers, including Heine Verlag (a German division of Random House), Albin Michel (a well-known French publisher), or Malpaso Ediciones in Spain. *A Brief History of the Seven Killings*, however, only came to prominence in Jamaica once it had been awarded the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 2015,[601] thereby confirming that international recognition lends higher visibility to Caribbean literature in the region itself. Yet, if being published in a metropolitan centre does bestow literary value or credit upon a Caribbean writer and their work, it also exposes them to cultural globalization and mass consumption. As Jennifer Rahim has

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[598] Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. by M. B. DeBevoise (Cambridge, Mass; London: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 87–88.

[599] See for example *Ibis Rouge* in French Guyana and the diffusion of its books across the Francophone overseas territories, particularly in the Eastern Caribbean.

[600] See the role of Casa de las Américas in particular, as highlighted by Nancy Morejon, Lourdes Arencibia and Ileana Sanz in 'Foro: Cuba traduce el Caribe', *Tusaaji: A Translation Review*, 3, 3 (2014), 88–100.

[601] See <http://theconcourse.deadspin.com/how-a-brief-history-of-seven-killings-embodies-the-real-1740288261> [accessed 18 May 2017]

pointed out, '[t]he region must negotiate its survival in a sea of cross-currents where it simultaneously functions, on the one hand, as a geo-cultural commodity for consumption by the North/West and, on the other, as a major consumer of its attractively packaged and internationalized consumerist culture'[602]. Bearing in mind this double-bind, this chapter will examine the transactions at play in the 'translation' of Caribbean literature when considered in its transnational and transoceanic crossings. The focus here will be on alternative models of literary circulation in order to examine the extent to which the core/periphery model usually privileged by World Literature studies can be challenged. To do so, the initiatives and strategies undertaken by (relatively) small and/or independent publishers based in Canada, Germany and England, all specialising, to a lesser or greater extent, in Caribbean literature, will be compared with each other to complicate a vertical reading of literary traffic and present, instead, interconnected, lateral modes of transmission. Ultimately, by interrogating global translations from the perspective of Caribbean studies, the aim is to envisage practices of cultural mediation and translatability from the archipelagic and the trans-local. The final sections of the chapter draw on a five-month research project conducted in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and will be devoted to one local publisher in particular, *Isla Negra Editores*. The pan-Caribbean approach promoted by this publishing house will be put in dialogue with the strategies observed by the other non-regional publishers under study to see whether a different 'translation' of the Caribbean occurs when the reader is addressed as a 'local'.

7.1. Translating Caribbean localities: going with or against the flow of global forces?

7.1.1. (Criss)crossings of the Caribbean sea

The majority of Caribbean writers celebrated around the world have usually lived in the diaspora (even for a short time) and/or published, at least once in the course of their literary career with a 'recognized' publisher located, as it frequently happens, outside the Caribbean. Although the region remains a unique model of creolization where cultural, linguistic and artistic confluences are concerned, it paradoxically translates very little.

[602] Jennifer Rahim, '"A Quartet of Daffodils" Only: Negotiating the Specific and the Relational in the Context of Multiculturalism and Globalization', *Caribbean Literature in a Global Context*, ed. by Funso Aiyejina and Paula Morgan (San Juan, Trinidad & Tobago: Lexicon, 2006), p. 33.

When it does, translation becomes akin to an act of cannibalisation that aims at dis-(re)membering the literary canon inherited by former colonial powers, particularly in diglossic contexts.[603] The translation of French classics into Creole in Martinique, Guadeloupe and Guyane, provides a compelling example of such practices.[604] In the Cuban context, literary translation has been promoted by various cultural institutions, not least by *Casa de las Américas*, as already mentioned, and follows a certain ideological agenda,[605] which Nancy Morejón, herself a writer and translator of Francophone Caribbean literature, has described as follows:

> Considero que el futuro de la traducción del Caribe en Cuba, y la imagen del Caribe que de ella se desprende, es y seguirá siendo algo espléndido. Si se traduce bien y se escogen obras que representan lo más depurado de un cuerpo literario excepcional, plurilingüe, como es el nuestro, vamos a constituir una valiosa enciclopedia de nuestra historia cultural. *Esas obras escogidas, clásicos de la región, no deberán responder a las leyes de un Mercado cuyo vicio es el consumo, como único valor de intercambio, así como la enajenada deformación de nuestro ser múltiple pero único.* […] Como decía Glissant: hablamos y escribimos en el contexto de todas las lenguas del mundo, no solo

[603] The term 'cannibalisation' here refers to the Brazilian Anthropophagist ideology developed orginally by the Modernist poet Oswalde de Andrade in the 1920s and taken up in the 1960s by Haroldo and Augusto de Campos who applied it to translation: 'Both translated and wrote about translation, coining a range of new terms and metaphors with which to describe the creativity inherent in their postcolonial translation process. Translation could be seen as blood transfusion, as an act of patricide, as reinvention, as disremembering, as vampirism, as transcreation.' Susan Bassnett, 'Postcolonial Translation', in *Translation* (London, New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 37–59 (pp. 53–54).

[604] See Raphaël Confiant's translation of Camus's *L'Etranger*, *Moun-Andéw* (CaraïbEditions, 2012). The tradition of translating classics into Creole dates, however, further back in time, as F.-A. Marbot's translation of La Fontaine's *Fables* show. See Jean de la Fontaine, *Les Bambous: Fables de la Fontaine travesties en patois créole, par un vieux commandeur*, trans. by F.-A. Marbot (Fort-de-France, Martinique: Librairie de F. Thomas, 1869).

[605] This comment on ideological framing where translations are concerned should not be limited to the Cuban context, however. As pointed out by Lefevere, '[w]hether they produce translations, literary histories or their more compact spin-offs, reference works, anthologies, criticism, or editions, rewriters adapt, manipulate the originals they work with to some extent, usually to make them fit in with the dominant, or one of the dominant ideological and poetological currents of their time. Again, this may be most obvious in totalitarian societies, but different "interpretive communities" that exist in more open societies will influence the production of rewritings in similar ways.' André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and Literary Fame*, p. 8.

> la nuestra. Esa observación es la raíz más auténtica del Caribe.[606]
> (emphasis mine)

Translation is clearly identified as an instrument of anti-capitalism by Morejón who situates pan-Caribbean literary circulation outside the Greenwich Mean Time frame established by Casanova. Interestingly, Morejón also cites Glissant and his concept of *Tout-Monde* in this extract, stressing that the Caribbean is characterized by linguistic realities that defy cultural globalization and homogenization. Caribbean polyphony is also portrayed as the most authentic feature or 'root' ('raíz') of the region. Most of the small independent publishers under consideration in this paper have similarly adopted a polyvocal approach to render Caribbean complexities. On their webpage, the Canadian publisher *Mémoire d'Encrier* emphasizes their role as facilitator granting access to 'authentic voices' of cultural difference:

> Fondées à Montréal en mars 2003 par Rodney Saint-Éloi, les éditions Mémoire d'encrier se sont fixé pour mandat de réunir des auteurs de diverses origines autour d'une seule et même exigence : l'authenticité des voix. […]
>
> Mémoire d'encrier publie des auteurs québécois, amérindiens, antillais, arabes, africains… représentant ainsi une large plate-forme où se confrontent les imaginaires dans l'apprentissage et le respect de la différence et de la diversité culturelle.[607]

The Leeds-based independent publisher Peepal Tree Press, self-proclaimed 'Home of the Best in Caribbean and Black British Writing', aspires to 'narrate the Caribbean nation' by which they mean to foreground the cultural diversity and marginality of the region in their catalogue.[608] For *Litradukt*, a German publisher

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[606] Nancy Morejón, 'Foro: Cuba traduce el Caribe', *Tusaaji: A Translation Review*, 3, 3 (2014), 88–100 (p. 92).

[607] < http://memoiredencrier.com/memoire-dencrier/> [accessed 15 May 2017]

[608] See the publisher's webpage devoted to their mission statement and their history, <http://peepaltreepress.com/about-us> [accessed 16 May 2017]. In his Keynote Speech to their 25th anniversary celebration, marked by a one-day conference organized at the University of Leeds on 25 February 2017, Kwame Dawes, writer and Associate Poetry Editor for *Peepal*, underlines the provocative aspect behind the publisher's declared mission to 'narrate the Caribbean nation', 'given our impossibilities to deny the fact that the Caribbean is a space in which multiple nations have been formed and have doggedly resisted geopolitical unity.' See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0cTINvzoEU> [accessed 16 May 2017]

specialising in Haitian fiction, the publishing strategy seems to slightly differ, as their aim has been to focus primarily on an even smaller niche given their size as publisher.[609] As far as *Isla Negra Editores* is concerned, the only Caribbean-based publisher under study here, the emphasis is laid on giving access to (mostly) Caribbean literature to local audiences located in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Cuba, as the books they publish circulate chiefly on those three islands, although not solely. As Carlos Roberto Gómez Beras puts it:

> […] la misión de la Editorial Isla Negra es facilitar la publicación y difusión de la literatura hecha *en el Caribe, sobre el Caribe y por el Caribe* que tanto en su forma como en su contenido representa una alternativa "impredecible" a la, muchas veces, "predecible" literatura canónica.[610]

In his mission statement, Gómez Beras underlines another key aspect of *Isla Negra*'s work, that of lending (higher) visibility to emerging and (re)emerging voices, mostly from the Hispanophone Caribbean, that go against the flow of a given literary establishment and their criteria of publishing selection. In that sense, both *Isla Negra* and Peepal Tree call for the need to regularly cast a new light on Caribbean literature so as to keep some of its classics alive and even restore them, whilst helping budding writers from the region to be published. In their *Caribbean Modern Classics Series* launched in 2009, in which new paratextual matter has been added to offer a contemporary perspective on a given classic, Peepal Tree aims to restore what they deem essential books of Caribbean literature.[611] Most of the authors published in their imprint have become brand names in Anglophone Caribbean literature (Wilson Harris, Earl Lovelace or Georges Lamming to

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[609] During an e-mail interview from 2 May 2016, Peter Trier, translator and founder of *Litradukt*, provided me with the following answer regarding their editorial strategies: 'Au début, je voulais également traduire des auteurs africains (j'en ai effectivement publié un) mais j'ai compris que cela serait un champ trop vaste. Je me suis donc limité aux Caraïbes. Je ne veux pas exclure d'étendre nos activités aux Antilles non francophone, mais c'est aussi une question de capacités. Nous ne pouvons sortir que 2 ou 3 livres par an et les Caraïbes francophones, spécialement Haïti, sont si riches en bons auteurs que je n'ai pour le moment pas besoin de regarder ailleurs. En plus, les éditions *Litradukt* sont perçues par le public et par les médias comme éditeur spécialisé de littérature haïtienne (complétée par quelques auteurs de Guadeloupe et de Martinique) et je me dis qu'il faut savoir rester dans sa niche.'

[610] Carlos Roberto Gómez Beras, *Catálogo 1994-1999* (San Juan: Isla Negra Editores, 1999), p. 5.

[611] 'In 2009 we launched the Caribbean Modern Classics Series, which restores to print essential books from the past with new introductions.' <http://peepaltreepress.com/about-us> [accessed 16 May 2017]

name but a few) and are systematically introduced by a recognized literary peer and/or scholar. Similarly, *Mémoire d'encrier* features its own collection of classics ('Les Classiques'), which, interestingly enough, includes not only works published in their original French version, but also in translation, among which important theoretical texts appear.[612] This characteristic should be stressed as it can become an issue for small, independent publishers whose catalogues may be limited to one linguistic realm of the Caribbean due to low budgets.[613] The German publisher *Litradukt* provides a counter-example to that pattern, as their catalogue solely relies on translations of contemporary Haitian fiction, a specificity that singles them out on the German book market as well as in the scope of this chapter, albeit for different reasons.[614]

As has been shown, global publishing, understood as the complex transnational movements observed in the reception and diffusion of books, does not necessarily entail the mass-consumption of readymade, exotic pictures of the Caribbean, at least where smaller, independent presses specialising in Caribbean literature are concerned.[615] Yet, those movements do not always entail actual translations or multilingual versions of literary works, which, when attempting to narrate Caribbean specificities might prove an obstacle to render the region's cultural diversity. Translational initiatives and global exposure are held in a precarious balance with cultural 'authenticity' when it comes to

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[612] Fernando Ortiz's *Controverse cubaine entre le tabac et le sucre*, trans. by Jacques-François Bonaldi (Mémoire d'encrier, Montreal: 2011), originally published in Spanish in 1940 (Cuba) and soon translated into English (by Harriet De Onís, © 1947 Alfred A. Knopf) although out of print for a long time (© 1995, Duke University Press), is a telling example.

[613] Jeremy Poynting, *Peepal Tree*'s founder and managing editor, has deplored this point during a Q&A session closing the one-day conference organized by the publishing house on 'Narrating the Caribbean Nation' on 25 February 2017 at Leeds University.

[614] Although *Litradukt* does not feature as an exception in the German literary scene when it comes to publishing Caribbean literature – given its 'relative' absence as a colonial power in the region, Germany imports Caribbean languages and literatures into its own market – the publisher nonetheless highlights their unique position as specialist of Haitian fiction on their webpage: 'Litradukt, gegründet 2006, ist ein Kleinverlag für Literatur aus der Karibik, speziell aus Haiti. Wir dürften der einzige deutschsprachige Verlag mit diesem Schwerpunkt sein.' <http://www.litradukt.de/> [accessed 29 May 2017]

[615] See Christopher Prendergast's introduction to *Debating World Literature*, when he presents more specifically Francesca Orsini's contribution to the volume and her reaction to Casanova and Moretti's works on world literature in relation to literary traditions such as India's: 'The principal claims here is, again, that the model of centre and periphery, the latter pulled inexorably into the orbit of the former, simply fails to do justice to the complex facts on the ground.' Christopher Prendergast, 'Introduction', *Debating World Literature*, ed. by C. Prendergast (London: Verso, 2004), pp. vii–xiii (p.xii).

packaging the Caribbean, a pitfall that all four publishers have addressed one way or another.

7.1.2. Authenticating the (polyvocal) Caribbean

In *Cette grenade dans la main du jeune nègre est-elle une arme ou un fruit ?*, Dany Laferrière, a Haitian writer of global fame living in Canada, recalls the following anecdote during an encounter with an American publisher:

> - Comme vous venez de la Caraïbe, nous avions pensé…
> - Toujours la même connerie ! Les gens doivent écrire sur leur coin d'origine ! J'écris sur ce qui se passe aujourd'hui, là où je vis.
> - Oh non, je ne voulais pas dire cela…
> - Dites-moi quoi écrire pendant qu'on y est !
> - C'était uniquement une suggestion.[616]

In this scene, Laferrière's *persona* reacts with anger to the publisher's assumption that, being from Haiti, the writer must (and perhaps only can) write about his country of birth and the Caribbean at large. Although Laferrière's writing is much more centred, as a rule, on interracial relationships than on the Caribbean per se, the publisher's expectation makes a point about what can be perceived as 'Caribbean writing'. If focusing on small independent publishers can help us circumvent some of the most glaring consumerist trends of Western capitalism and shift the vertical angle of analysis from centre and periphery to a more fractional mode of reading cultural translations on a global scale, it nonetheless requires to take into consideration the question of representation. Can there be, in fact, such an entity as 'Caribbean literature' in the singular given the region's fragmented realities? What are the criteria that authors who fall under the rubric of 'Caribbean writers', both in global and local book markets, have

[616] Dany Laferrière, *Cette grenade dans la main du jeune nègre est-elle une arme ou un fruit ?* (Montreal: vlb éditeur, 1993), p. 15.

to meet to be deemed authentic voices? Does this authenticity translate beyond yet other forms of disguised, 'soft exoticism'[617]?

In a roundtable closing their two-day events around *Peepal Tree*'s 32 years of existence, Jeremy Poynting discussed future publishing strategies with writers and stressed the danger of decontextualizing Caribbean literature in its global traffic.[618] If focusing, instead, on (re)contextualising the region is a key part of its authentication for non-regional, international readers, it is equally important for a local publisher such as *Isla Negra*. To Gómez Beras, authenticity is coupled, however, with the refusal for writers to be shaped by the dictates of literary institutions, which do not convey the complex realities of the literary scene in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean as a whole. In his introduction to the first volume of *Los nuevos caníbales*, he observes the following :'[u]na de las aportaciones más significativas de este trabajo antológico fue llamar la atención sobre la existencia de una rica realidad literaria paralela y marginal, pero desconocida en los espacios públicos de la literatura institucional o canónica.'[619] *Isla Negra* has a similar strategy in *El canon secuestrado*, an imprint that seeks to reveal some of the marginalised voices of Caribbean literature and which offers some bilingual editions, as will be seen further on. Yet, it should be noted that *Isla Negra*'s publications remain for their most part monolingual and aimed at Hispanophone audiences. *Mémoire d'encrier*, although it, too, primarily addresses a monolingual (Francophone) readership, also offers some bilingual and Creole editions of Caribbean literature. Edouard Glissant's *Monsieur Toussaint* is thus presented in a parallel translation that features Rodolf Etienne's (Martinican) Creole version of the play on the right-hand side of the original in

[617] The expression is borrowed from Gustavo Pérez Firmat who defines it as 'diversity without distance: 'The Caribbean offers the Exot or pseudo-Exot [quoting Segalen here to refer to 'the subject of exoticism'] the opportunity to satisfy his or her wanderlust, to move out in space and go back in time, without having to wander.' Gustavo Pérez-Firmat, 'Pirates of the Caribbean: Soft Exoticism and the Aesthetics of Diversity', *Essays: Exploring the Global Caribbean*, ed. by Susan Roberson (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp. 62–86 (p. 67).

[618] 'Narrating the Caribbean Nation', 25 February 2017 at Leeds University, UK.

[619] Carlos Roberto Gómez Beras, 'Una ventana entreabierta', *Los nuevos caníbales: antología de la más reciente cuentística del Caribe hispano*, 2nd edn (San Juan: Isla Negra Editores, La Habana: Ediciones Unión, Santo Domingo: Editorial Búho, 2004), pp. 191–195 (p. 192).

French. The text is introduced by Michael Dash, a specialist and translator of Glissant's work who presents the bilingual edition of the play as follows:

> « Entreprendre le travail à nouveau » pour Toussaint signifie s'imaginer dans un nouvel espace, c'est-à-dire devenir un *marronneur* ingouverné et errant. Ce qu'il pratique, c'est l'art de l'invention et de la traduction. Toute traduction de *Monsieur Toussaint* se doit donc de rester fidèle à l'esprit de la pièce et à l'intention de l'auteur. Quand Glissant dit dans la préface de 1978 qu'il a résisté « à un mécanisme simple de créolisation » et que « la mise en scène de cette histoire peut décider de son environnement linguistique », on comprend qu'il a voulu maintenir une instabilité linguistique qui invitait à la traduction. Traduire cette pièce, c'est la créoliser.[28]

Here, translation is presented as a constitutive element of Glissant's literary enterprise in *Monsieur Toussaint* and takes on a particular Caribbean dimension as it contributes to (further) creolizing the play, thereby legitimizing Etienne's version as a natural extension of the yet to-be-completed original ('la mise en scène de cette histoire peut décider de son environnement linguistique'). If such translational practices invite a polyphonic, thus 'authentic' reading of Caribbean realities, they nonetheless remain few and far between in mainstream publishing[620] and are generally limited to two genres that are themselves considered literary hybrids and located at the crossroads between the written and the oral, namely poetry and drama. *Litradukt*'s catalogue adds another dimension to the question of 'authentic representation' when it comes to publishing Caribbean literature aimed at European audiences. Among the list of Haitian writers they publish, *Litradukt* features household names such as Gary Victor, Louis-Philippe Dalembert, Kettly Mars, or again Anthony Phelps. Political, societal, religious and environmental characteristics often considered as staples of Haitian literature are brought to the fore by the publisher in their various presentations of the titles featured in their catalogue. In the case of Mars's *Ich bin am Leben*, the 2010 earthquake and its aftermath on a Haitian family are highlighted,[621] whilst Phelps's *Wer hat Guy und Jacques Colin verraten?* is presented as a fictitious account set during the Duvalier regime, as is Mars's

[620] As opposed to bilingual readers or scholarly editions, for example.
[621] See the blurb on the content of the book ('Inhalt'), < http://www.litradukt.de/buecher/ich-bin-am-leben/> [accessed 30 May 2017]

Wilde Zeiten.[622] Gary Victor's novels are presented from a slightly different angle, as their covers indicate.[623] Victor is mainly associated with crime fiction, a genre particularly popular among European and North American audiences which lends itself well to Caribbean transpositions, to which several anthologies devoted to Noir fiction set in Cuba, Haiti or Puerto Rico, among other locations, attest.[624] However, as Ann Steiner has argued about Swedish crime fiction author Stieg Larsson, what may appear as typically 'Scandinavian/Swedish' to international audiences, or, in the present case, 'Caribbean/Haitian', may not necessarily coincide with local, domestic views of an author.[625] In that sense, focusing on Caribbean literature from the angle of small publishers specialising in a particular niche or genre that seeks to provide the reader with a plausible,[626] polyphonic representation of the Caribbean, ultimately constitutes a viable alternative route of circulation for minor cultures that may otherwise run the risk of oscillating between assimilation and exoticism. Conversely, the traffic and translation of literature on a global scale might equally benefit from being studied from a Caribbean perspective.

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[622] See <http://www.litradukt.de/buecher/wer-hat-guy-und-jacques-colin-verraten/> and <http://www.litradukt.de/buecher/wilde-zeiten/> [accessed 21 May 2017]

[623] See <http://www.litradukt.de/buecher/soro/> or again <http://www.litradukt.de/buecher/schweinezeiten/> [accessed 03 March 2017]

[624] See *Haiti Noir*, ed. by Edwidge Danticat (New York: Akashic Books, 2010) and translated into French, *Haïti*
Noir, by Patricia Barbe-Girault (Paris: Asphalte, 2012), or again *San Juan Noir*, ed. by Mayra Santos-Febres (New York: Akashic Books, 2016), concomitantly published in Spanish and English (translations into English by Will Vanderhyden).

[625] 'In mapping out the international book trade of world literature, one useful concept is the slightly misused term "glocal". Literature is produced in a local context, but is often sold and distributed globally. Texts are recontextualized, reinterpreted, and in many cases used as trademarks for "Swedish," "French," or "Indian". For instance, Swedish author Stieg Larsson, who has been on all the bestseller lists in Europe, is not seen as a typically Swedish author in his own country, where his work's affinities with British and American crime fiction have been stressed in the critique. Even though the stories take place in Stockholm and other identifiable places around the country, it is not regarded as fiction that depicts Swedish national characteristics. However, outside the country, Larsson's work has been received and read as relating an image of contemporary Sweden […]'. Ann Steiner, 'World Literature and the Book Market', *The Routledge Companion to World Literature*, ed. by Theo D'haen, David Damrosch and Djelal Kadir (London, New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 316–324 (p. 323).

[626] The term is preferred to 'authentic', as it conveys the underlying idea that literature (and translation) can only sound or seem close to one interpretation of reality, rather than aiming at a flawless, essentialist rendering of it. The term further alludes to the writer (and the translator)'s intention to offer a convincing, persuasive tale to their reader, which ultimately brings out the trickster figure (rather than the traitor) in any fictitious account.

7.1.3. Towards a Caribbeanisation of global translations?

As appealing as it might sound, the concept of 'the Caribbean nation' only seems valid to me as long as it is understood as a mosaic-like model, invoking a collection of tesserae that might form a whole when put together, but that ultimately acknowledges the rifts and fault lines that characterize the intricate, uneven cartographies of the region. As Susan Roberson observes, quoting Stuart Hall and Georges Lamming:

> [O]ne must be cautious of homogenizing all Caribbeans under one label or identity: "Not a single Caribbean island looks like any other in terms of its ethnic composition… cultures or languages." The homogenizing processes of globalization are resisted by the local and the personal, by a way of seeing things from the "castle of [one's] skin," so that Martinique is not Jamaica and Haiti is not Cuba.[627]

The last point raised by Roberson might at first glance seem anecdotal, but illustrates in fact one of the thorniest issues faced by translators of Caribbean literature: for instance, can or even should Guyanese Creole be transposed into a Caribbean variant, say Martinican or Guadeloupean Creole, when translating for a Francophone audience? Or can/should another form of creolization be envisaged when carrying across one specifically identified Caribbean locality?[628] Those questions have yet to be further investigated by translators and publishers alike in their joint efforts to promote the circulation of Caribbean literature on a global as well as on a local level. To Peter Trier, translator and founder of *Litradukt*, what matters most is finding the right balance between fidelity to the original and readability of the text for the reader:

> Laëtitia Saint-Loubert: 'Pensez-vous que les enjeux traductionnels diffèrent selon que le lectorat ciblé possède, ou non, dans l'histoire et la culture de son pays, un « équivalent » caribéen (je pense notamment à la traduction de textes d'auteurs de la Caraïbe anglophone en français, avec souvent, des

[627] Susan Roberson, *Essays: Exploring the Global Caribbean* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), p. xii.

[628] The point was already raised in Devi's translation of Dabydeen's *The Counting House* into French (see Chapter 6).

> transpositions vers des réalités linguistiques ou culturelles observées dans les DOM, ou autres spécificités régionales) ?'
>
> Peter Trier: 'Question intéressante. Je ne me la suis pas encore posée parce que nous traduisons pour un lectorat qui n'a pas cet « équivalent ». Oui, je pense qu'on pourrait traduire autrement si on avait cette possibilité de transposition vers une région qui serait à l'Allemagne ce que les DOM/TOM sont à la France. Ceci dit, ce serait chaque fois un choix délicat à faire. La recherche de l'équilibre entre la fidélité à l'original et la lisibilité s'en trouverait peut-être encore plus compliquée.'[629]

As already mentioned, *Isla Negra* and *Mémoire d'encrier* have published bilingual volumes that help convey some of the linguistic, diglossic realities of the Caribbean. Yet, if the core/periphery model applied to World Literature is to take inspiration from a Caribbean approach, further trans-local, archipelagic initiatives have to be promoted by the publishing industry and in turn investigated by researchers. Co-editions, which can signal the joint enterprise of publishers from various cultural, ideological and geographical backgrounds, also provide a viable alternative to global or mass circulation. *Éditions Zulma* (based in Paris) and *Mémoire d'encrier* have created an imprint composed of major francophone works exclusively translated into Wolof, thereby addressing a number of African readers. Thus far, the series has been limited to three books that include classics such as Aimé Césaire's *Une saison au Congo*, in a translation by Boubacar Boris Diop (*Nawetu deret*), or Franco-Mauritian author Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio's *L'Africain*, translated by Daouda NDiaye (*Baay sama, doomu Afrig*).[42] Diop, who is the head of the imprint and shares similar views on African languages as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o,[630] advocates an archipelagic logic for the circulation of global literature that, far from abiding to the polysystemic model,[631] attempts to build trans-local bridges of communication between heretofore neglected literary spaces. Yet, in order to offer a

[629] Email interview with Peter Trier conducted on 22 May 2016.

[630] Both started writing in the dominant language of English, in the case of wa Thiong'o and French in that of Diop, but later switched to their respective Gikuyu and Wolof. See Diop's statement on that point in *Mémoire d'encrier* press kit, <http://www.ceytu.fr/datas/pdf/pdf-ext-143dpceytumars2017pdf.pdf> [accessed 30 May 2017], p. 1.

[631] In reference to Itamar Evan-Zohar's theory of polysystems.

comprehensive perspective on the practical results achieved by such editorial lines, further cross-analyses need to be conducted to assess the impact of global translations in their contexts of production, as well as of diffusion and reception.[632] The vectorial model developed by Ottmar Ette comes to mind here as a possible cartography from which to (re)think the circulation of literature trans-locally. Drawing from the concept of 'fractal patterns' developed by mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot, Ette applies the notion to Caribbean realities and the region's insularity more specifically, echoing – whilst distancing himself from – Walcott, Glissant and Benítez-Rojo.[633] With regard to Caribbean literature, Ette observes:

> The Caribbean and its literature form a fundamentally complex system that rests on interaction, overlap and self-similarities that show the natural and cultural geometry of the Caribbean to be fractal in nature. […] Isolation is only one part of the insul-ation that increasingly embraces all Caribbean cultural, literary and artistic developments. Insulation also signifies a broken relationality within a region that is in no respect homogenous. Labelling such a system as fundamentally complex ultimately means that an *isolated* view of the (national) literature of each individual island must take into account the respective overlapping transnational and transcultural networks. Therefore, transdisciplinary approaches are required.[634]

In the dialogue between translation, cultural and global studies, it seems equally important to adopt a comparative or even a 'fractal' approach to allow new insights into the intricate negotiations at play between small, medium and large scale literary circulation. The selection of the independent publishers presented in this chapter has been made with the intent purpose of studying Caribbean (imagi)nations from a transversal rather than from a hierarchical perspective. Simultaneously, Caribbean literature*s*[635] can

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[632] This point has been discussed throughout Chapter 6 as well.

[633] Unlike Benítez-Rojo, Ette argues that the Caribbean is not a 'meta-archipelago' devoid of literary and cultural centres and borders, for example. See Ottmar Ette, 'Islands, Borders and Vectors: The Fractal World of the Caribbean', *Caribbean Interfaces*, ed. by Lieven D'hulst, Jean-Marc Moura, Liesbeth De Bleeker & Nadia Lie (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 109–151 (p. 147).

[634] *Ibid*., pp. 147–148.

[635] Here I follow Hugo Achúgar who similarly talks of literatures in the plural when looking at Latin America. '"La presente multiplicidad y fragmentación de la producción cultural en Hispanoamérica exigiría un nuevo

provide a rich standpoint from which to analyse translation both as a concept and as a practice, insofar as they reveal the commonalities shared by singular forms of language, representation and culture, whilst reminding us of their insularity and the limits of their transferability. As such, a Caribbeanization of translation and cultural studies invites us to think untranslatability no longer as an avowal of failure or defeat, but as a natural, constitutive element of globalization. As the last section dedicated to *Isla Negra* will demonstrate, transversal modes of literary circulation based on models of inter-island cooperation and solidarity – a model already signaled in chapter 6, although not specifically applied to pan-Caribbean publishing practices – have emerged in the region. Those alternative circuits of circulation seek to bypass national, bilateral and mainstream routes of access to literature and culture and, as such, sketch out new cartographies for minor spaces of literary production and diffusion within the existing tide of world literary systems.[636]

7.2. *Isla Negra Editores…* publishing *dentro y fuera del Caribe*[637]

Even a cursory glance at the shelves of the local bookstores located in various areas of the metropolitan area of San Juan, the capital city of Puerto Rico, allows tourists and residents alike to have an overview of the current modes of literary circulation on the island. Thus, whilst most local bookstores such as *AC Libros*, *La Tertulia* (both in Old San Juan and in the student, popular neighborhood of Rio Píedras), *Libreria Mágica* and the *Instituto de la Cultura Puertorriqueña* do offer a comprehensive range of locally-

concepto de literature que permietiera dar cuenta de la fragmentación. O, simplemente, abandonar la pretensión universal de la noción de literatura hispanoamericana y hablar de literaturas en plural" (ACHÚGAR. 1989: 153-154).' Cited in María Julia Daroqui, (*Dis)locaciones: Narrativas híbridas del Caribe hispano*, p. 17.

[636] The expression 'World literary systems' alludes both to the original concept of Goethe's *Weltliteratur* and to the theory of polysystems developed by Itamar Evan-Zohar here. Following Franco Moretti's approach to world-literature in conjunction with the analysis of world-systems (Franco Moretti, 'Dos textos en torno a la teoría del sistema-mundo', in I. M. Sánchez-Prado, ed., *América Latina en la "literatura mundial"* (Pittsburgh, PA: Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana, University of Pittsburgh: 2006, pp. 47-62), p. 55. Our understanding of 'world literary systems' wishes, in turn, to emphasize the asymmetrical nature of the world literary market.

[637] This section of the thesis is a redrafted version of a previously published article. Where indicated, parts of the article have been reproduced as they appeared in their initial publication. See Laëtitia Saint-Loubert, 'Publishing against the tide: *Isla Negra Editores*, an example of pan-Caribbean transL/National solidarity', *La traducción literaria en el Gran Caribe*, *Mutatis Mutandis*, 10, 1 (2017), 44–67.

published literature, their selection remains fairly limited when considering the larger presence of international literature as the photographs below illustrate.

Illustration 1

English editions, including international bestsellers such as Grisham, Connelly and Safran Foer's latest novels (photograph taken at *AC Libros*, Santurce © Laëtitia Saint-Loubert; December 2016).

Illustration 2

English editions of international bestsellers set in the display window that separates the book-selling area from the café in *AC Libros* (photograph taken in *AC Libros*, Santurce, © Laëtitia Saint-Loubert; December 2016).

Illustration 3

Spanish editions of local publications among which the latest books published by *Isla Negra Editores* in the front row (photograph taken in *Librería Mágica*, Rio Píedras © Laëtitia Saint-Loubert; December 2016).

To some extent, those photographs reveal the uneven power at play in the circulation of international (and local) literature in Puerto Rico, as the first two illustrations place, for example, English editions of bestsellers prominently, whereas the third photograph, which features local literature in Spanish, was taken in a bookstore that sells second-hand books as well as brand new ones in the popular/student area of Río Piedras. If such examples illustrate the asymmetrical nature of literary recognition and publishing instances observed at the macro-level of literary world-systems, revealing the omnipresence of publishing centres within peripheral spaces, they should however be qualified, particularly when comparing the Puerto Rican publishing sector with that of the French Antilles, where (inter)nationally recognized Martinican and Guadeloupean authors are mostly published in mainland France, for example. As the third illustration shows, *Isla Negra* is as established publisher in Puerto Rico and 2016 marked the publisher's 25th anniversary. To celebrate the event, cultural activities such as book launches, presentations and panels were devoted to the publisher both during the *Festival de la Palabra* in San Juan (October 20th-25th 2016) and during the 19th *Feria Internacional del Libro* held in Santo Domingo (September 19th- October 2nd 2016). Local newspapers and social media also paid various tributes to the publisher's long-term presence on the literary scene.[638] If promoting Caribbean literature within the region and for a local audience has remained a top priority for *Isla Negra* since its inception, the scope of the publisher's readership has also evolved with the advent of social networks and their decision to have a presence on the web. Thanks to the promotion of their catalogue and an online marketplace on their webpage, the books published by *Isla Negra* are now accessible throughout the world.[639] What has remained unchanged on their agenda,

[638] *El Post Antillano*, a Puerto-Rican based digital news outlet that aims to inform its readers from across the Greater Caribbean, has underlined the political, activist undercurrent of *Isla Negra*'s editorial projects: 'Isla Negra Editores es el principal proyecto político-cultural de más larga duración en el Caribe hispano. Contrario a otras editoriales, Isla Negra Editores no tiene un Editor Jefe, tiene un Embajador Cultural desde que tomara cuerpo el 16 de enero de 1991, contra todos los vientos huracanados que nos pretendieron negar en el preámbulo del fin de la historia de Puerto Rico como país caribeño.' (Wilkins Román Samot, Celebrarán los 25 años de Isla Negra Editores, lunes 17 de octubre de 2016 13:37, <http://elpostantillano.net/cultura/18240-2016-10-17-18-42-47.html> [accessed 20 October 2016]

[639] Back in 2005, at the time of their webpage launch, the daily Puerto-Rican newspaper *El nuevo día* welcomed the publisher's decision to opt for an online presence, which it regarded as a step into modernity: 'Dice que es un salto a la modernidad', Tatiana Pérez Rivera, 'Estrena Isla Negra un puente virtual literario', *El nuevo día*, 'Arte y cultura', 4 August 2005, p. 9.

though, has been the promotion of an alternative literature that goes against the grain of traditional and expected forms of canonical works. In addition to this political stance, *Isla Negra* also insists on the importance of adopting a collaborative approach to publishing and works closely with writers, editors, printers and translators from the Greater Caribbean (mainly from Cuba and the Dominican Republic) as well as other parts of the world.[640] Their uninterrupted participation in the Feria del Libro in Santo Domingo for well over a decade further attests to their commitment with long-time partners and collaborators from the Hispanophone Caribbean. Furthermore, as two of the publisher's imprints show, the aptly named *Los nuevos caníbales* and *El canon secuestrado*, *Isla Negra* proposes a subversive model of pan-Caribbean publishing that openly seeks to disrupt vertical models of literary circulation.

7.2.1. *Los nuevos caníbales* and *El canon secuestrado*: two of *Isla Negra*'s flagship imprints[641]

To date, *Los nuevos caníbales* counts a total of three anthologies, the latter of which, devoted to microfiction, was presented during several events pertaining to the publisher's twenty-five years of existence during my research project. The imprint is presented as '*antologías y otras compilaciones*'[642] and consists in the compilation of Cuban, Dominican and Puerto-Rican literature divided into three distinct sections, each introduced by the anthologist in charge of their geographical area. However, the volumes of *Los nuevos caníbales* bring together the three Hispanophone islands of the Greater Caribbean to dialogue with each other around a specific genre. Thus, the first volume of the series is devoted to short stories, while the second one consists of contemporary poetry from the three islands and the third one brings together *microcuentos*. As the blurb on the back cover of the first *Nuevos caníbales* indicates, the imprint is guided by the following mission statement:

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[640] See the co-translation of Hungarian poet Lázlo Deák's *A media voz, poesías escogidas* by María Teresa Reyes and Georges Ferdinandy discussed in greater depth further on pp. 239–240.

[641] This section of the chapter appeared as it is presented here in Laëtitia Saint-Loubert, 'Publishing against the tide: *Isla Negra Editores*, an example of pan-Caribbean transL/National solidarity', *La traducción literaria en el Gran Caribe*, *Mutatis Mutandis*, 10, 1 (2017), 44–67.

[642] *Isla Negra Editores*, <http://www.editorialislanegra.com/index.php?option=com_virtuemart&Itemid=7&vmcchk=1&Itemid=7> [accessed 28 October 2016]

> Cuba, República Dominicana y Puerto Rico, parte de ese espacio antillano tan conflictivo y similar como distante y sencillo, participan con estos relatos de esa 'anthropomancia', que consiste en buscar de entre sus vísceras comunicantes la adivinación de lo que son y lo que serán. De ahí su título: *Los nuevos caníbales*, porque comen de sí mismos, destruyéndose para re-crearse, y también, como nuevos hambrientos, van tras huellas de Carpentier, Alonso, Cardoso, Bosch, Díaz Grullón, Contreras, Sánchez y Vega, entre otros.[643]

The metaphors of cannibalism and anthropomancy are key to understanding the publisher's editorial line, as their project partakes in the creation of a new canon aimed at and originating from the Greater Caribbean. If, initially, Gómez Beras's work aimed at bringing to the forefront of the Puerto-Rican literary scene marginalized authors from the generation of the 1980s, *Isla Negra Editores* has since then adopted a wider, pan-Caribbean publishing strategy, at least as far as the Hispanophone part of the region is concerned.[644] The second imprint this section wishes to focus on, *El canon secuestrado*, counts a total of twenty-three books to date and is presented by the publisher as '*nuevas ediciones de nuevos clásicos*'.[645] Two titles in particular have been selected from this imprint to highlight the process of revamping the Caribbean canon, focusing here more

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[643]Marilyn Bobes León, Pedro Antonio Valdez, Carlos Roberto Gómez Beras, eds, *Los nuevos caníbales: antología de la más reciente cuentística del Caribe hispano*, 2nd edn, San Juan: Isla Negra Editores, La Habana: Ediciones Unión, Santo Domingo: Editorial Búho, 2004.

[644] On this particular point, see the introduction by Médar Serrata, "Algo de la historia de Isla Negra Editores" that served as the publisher's presentation for their 25th anniversary during the 19th Feria del Libro in Santo Domingo and the 2nd Festival de la Palabra of San Juan (Programa Académico): 'En una entrevista con la poeta puertorriqueña Ana María Fuster Lavín, Gómez Beras cuenta que años más tarde descubriría que el propio Neruda había creado una casa editorial llamada Ediciones Isla Negra, que solo llegó a publicar un título. Pero mientras el objetivo del poeta chileno era rescatar las obras de autores olvidados de la literatura de su país, la pequeña editorial creada por Gómez Beras y su amigo se proponía, originalmente, dar a conocer las obras de escritores puertorriqueños de la llamada Generación del 80, que no encontraban cabida en los sellos tradicionales. Desde entonces, Isla Negra Editores ha ampliado su red de acción para incluir autores de otras generaciones y otras latitudes, llegando a configurar un impresionante catálogo que se acerca a los 500 títulos, divididos en once colecciones, y entre los que se encuentran las obras de algunos de los autores más prominentes de literatura contemporánea de Puerto Rico, República Dominicana y Cuba'. Médar Serrata, "Algo de la historia de Isla Negra Editores", *Programa actividades de la delegación de Isla Negra Editores en la FIL de RD 2016*, San Juan: Isla Negra Editores, pp. 3–5 (p. 3).

[645] *Isla Negra Editores*, <http://www.editorialislanegra.com/index.php?option=com_virtuemart&Itemid=7&vmcchk=1&Itemid=7> [accessed 28 October 2016]

specifically on the Puerto Rican example: *La isla silente*, by now internationally acclaimed Puerto-Rican author Eduardo Lalo, and *Puerto Rican Obituary/Obituario puertorriqueño*, a bilingual edition of Pedro Pietri's collection of poems with a Spanish translation by Alfredo Matilla Rivas. The latter title will briefly be compared with *Postcards of El Barrio* by Willie Perdomo, also published in a bilingual edition by *Isla Negra Editores*, but in a different series (*Filo de juego*). This selection of texts was made with the hope of reflecting the intricate processes of literary circulation and diffusion when it comes to Puerto Rico, taking into account the island's complex political status as *estado libre asociado*, and the (re)appropriation of its canon, particularly when considering emblematic Nuyorican poets such as Pietri and Perdomo, both published and recognized in the mainland United States. This analysis will then allow us to establish connections between the actual act of inter-linguistic translation and the role it plays in the passage from one literary space to another, highlighting the relationships between literary circulation, linguistic difference and the ever-present concept of betrayal in translation. As Franco Moretti has observed:

> La difusión generalmente conlleva una traducción: un movimiento, no solo de un espacio al otro, sino también de un lenguaje a otro. Ahora, la trama es fundamentalmente independiente del lenguaje, y se mantiene más o menos igual aún de un sistema de signos a otro (de la novela, digamos, a la ilustración, el cine, el ballet…). El estilo sin embargo no es sino lenguaje, y por tanto su traducción – *traduttore, traditore* – siempre es una traición potencial: de hecho, entre más complejo es un estilo, es 'mejor', y mayor es la posibilidad de que sus características más significativas se pierdan en la traducción.[646]

The link between form ('trama') and language ('estilo') established by Moretti will serve as a starting point to interrogate processes of 'back' translation ('back' into Spanish, the mother tongue shared by Pietri and Perdomo), since both source texts were initially written and published in English, but move from a bilingual, hybrid space of expression to a monolingual framework in their crossing of the Caribbean sea to reach the shores of Puerto Rico, as the code-switching present in the original texts somehow

[646] Franco Moretti, 'Dos textos en torno a la teoría del sistema-mundo', in I. M. Sánchez-Prado, ed., *América Latina en la "literatura mundial"*, p. 55.

disappears (or so it seems) in the Spanish translations.[647] Most of the writers published by *Isla Negra Editores* are from the Greater Caribbean and write in Spanish, although not exclusively. Gómez Beras has for example published some of his own poetry both in English and Spanish (albeit with a stronger focus on the latter language) so that the texts dialogue with and echo each other;[648] by the same token, Yvonne Denis Rosario, who initially published her collection of short-stories *Capá Prieto* in Spanish with *Isla Negra Editores* also wanted the English translation of her book (by Marcy Valdivieso) to come out in the same series, so that both versions would be available for the Puerto Rican, and to a certain extent, Caribbean reader. That being said, in his introduction to the Puerto Rican section of the first volume of *Los nuevos caníbales*, Gómez Beras unambiguously inscribes Puerto Rico within a Hispanophone Greater Caribbean and Latin American context, that is within a (semi) peripheral literary space,[649] rather than within the 'World Republic of Letters', in other words the major (global) cultural centres through which international literature circulates, traditionally represented by cities such as New York, London, Paris or Barcelona:

> A más de cien años de iniciarse nuestra particular relación con los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica, creemos pertinente destacar la narrativa más joven, la cual, a través del español, y de ciertos temas y recursos literarios, continúa hermanando a Puerto Rico con el Caribe y el resto de Hispanoamérica. La actualidad de estos relatos le ofrecerá al lector la oportunidad única de atisbar al paradójico Puerto Rico que estos cuentistas heredaron: el moderno y posmoderno, el industrial y tecnológico, el contaminado y ecológico, el migratorio y isleño, el real y cibernético, el colonial y

[647] References and titles of sections present in the article published in *Mutatis Mutandis* have been altered here and in the following sections and sub-sections in order to be coherent with the present work.

[648] See Carlos Roberto Gómez Beras's *Mapa al corazón del hombre: poesía 2008-2012* (San Juan: Isla Negra Editores, 2014), pp. 125–133.

[649] On the use of the term (semi) peripheral here, see Sánchez Prado's brief analysis of the Latin American publishing sector in his introduction to *América Latina en la 'literatura mundial'*: '[…] la caída de las industriales editoriales regionales y el ingreso de transnacionales del libro al mercado literario latinoamericano sujetan a la escritura latinoamericana a una serie de procesos transformativos que se asujetan más a criterios de ventas que a preocupaciones literarias específicas.' (Ignacio Sánchez Prado, '"Hijos de Metapa": un recorrido conceptual de la literatura mundial (a manera de introducción)', *América Latina en la "literatura mundial"* Pittsburgh, PA: Instituto Internacional de Literatura Iberoamericana, University of Pittsburgh, 2006, p. 7-46 (p. 8-9).

> plebiscitario, el metropolitano y caribeño, y el agónico y esperanzador de las últimas dos décadas.[650]

Furthermore, it could be argued that *Isla Negra Editores* attempts to re-inscribe authors from the Greater Caribbean within a literary narrative that goes beyond national borders, in the hope of creating a pan-Caribbean canon in which literary spaces would no longer be defined along linguistic and/or (neo) colonial lines. The publisher's work could in fact be said to go against the grain of what Pascale Casanova refers to as 'assimilation' or 'assimilated' writers in *The World Republic of Letters*, taking the example of V.S. Naipaul for the Caribbean context. She shows how some writers from minor, (post) colonial spaces, opt for a process of assimilation into a Western model so as to gain literary recognition (both in their homeland and in the former colonial centre) and thus enter the realm of canonical authors,[651] whilst highlighting that such a position places assimilated writers in an uncomfortable position. Casanova argues that 'assimilation arouses […] deep ambivalence in emerging literary spaces: it is at once the primary means of access to literature for writers who lack national resources of their own and the characteristic form of betrayal in such spaces'. She adds: '[a]rtists who seek assimilation in the center, and so betray the national literary cause, in a sense cease to belong to their native land.'[652] Gómez Beras's introduction to the Puerto Rican section of the first volume of *Los nuevos caníbales* may very well be interpreted as an expression of resistance to the centripetal pull of a certain type of canonization that entails processes of assimilation close to those portrayed by Casanova. As the publisher notes in his introduction, '*[u]na de las aportaciones más significativas de este trabajo antológico fue llamar la atención sobre la existencia de una rica realidad literaria paralela y marginal, pero desconocida en los espacios públicos de la literatura institucional o canónica*.' (Gómez Beras, *Ibid*., p. 192). In that light, both *Los nuevos caníbales* and *El canon secuestrado*, although they do acknowledge asymmetry in the circulation of literary material on a macro, as well as

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[650] Gómez Beras, 'Una ventana entreabierta', p. 191.

[651] In a similar vein, Francophone Caribbean writers published in mainland France, particularly the proponents of Créolité, among whom Patrick Chamoiseau or Raphaël Confiant, have at times been criticized for their exaggerated 'exoticization' of the Caribbean. On that particular point, see Celia Britton's 'Problems of Cultural Self-Representation: René Ménil, Patrick Chamoiseau and Raphaël Confiant', *Language and Literary From in French Caribbean Writing* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014), p. 27-47.

[652] Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, p. 209.

on a micro level, offer, as will be argued, new definitions of what a Caribbean literary canon should be constituted of.

7.2.2. Revamping the canon

Following a Glissantian model of relational thinking, Françoise Lionnet and Shuh-Mei Shih offer a framework of 'minor transnationalism' that, whilst acknowledging the logic of cultural and literary globalization, encourages transversal movements that circumvent traditional exchanges based on centripetal and centrifugal forces: 'The transnational, on the contrary, can be conceived as a space of exchange and participation wherever processes of hybridization occur and where it is still possible for cultures to be produced and performed without necessary mediation by the center'.[653] Similarly, it will argued that *Isla Negra Editores* proposes to revamp the Caribbean canon by re-appropriating some of its emblematic figures, but also by lending visibility to authors from younger generations, so that new voices and new cannibals may emerge from the Greater Caribbean.

Putting together an anthology necessarily entails a screening process, as each of the introductory sections to the volumes constituting *Los nuevos caníbales* reminds us of. For the first anthology, which comprises a selection of fifteen writers of short fiction, all born after 1950 and with at least one published work (or pending publication), the selection criteria entail relative arbitrariness as the anthologist/publisher Gómez Beras acknowledges in his presentation of the Puerto Rican context.[654] In the third volume of *Los nuevos caníbales* dedicated to microfiction, a similar emphasis is laid on the selective nature of the anthology which both includes and at the time leaves out authors and their literary production, or as the author/anthologist of the Dominican section argues:

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[653] Françoise Lionnet and Shu-Mei Shih, *Minor Transnationalism* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 5.

[654] 'La selección de los quince cuentistas que conforman nuestra presencia en esta Antología es el resultado de un proceso que puede (y suele) ser de naturaleza injusta y exclusiva; creemos pertinente presentar algunos de los 'criterios objetivos' que intentaron contrapesar los 'otros e innegables criterios subjetivos' de aquéllos que hemos seleccionado, así como las 'excepciones' que, casualmente, parecen balancear la impersonalidad de los primeros […]', Gómez Beras, 'Una ventana entreabierta', p. 194.

> Esta participación dominicana en Los nuevos caníbales de microcuento muestra una cara, no la única posible, de la minificción en nuestro país. Como toda antología, es cruel: no muertos, no nacidos después de 1950, no más de doce y que hayan publicado libros.[655]

In a sense then, creating a new canon calls for constant emendations and revisions, as the very nature of an anthology entails a limited scope, focusing generally on a representative sample of a given genre or period of study. Furthermore, opting for contemporary authors also places the publisher's work at the vanguard of a new canon that does away with a traditional understanding of the term and often implies historical as well as temporal distance.[656] Similarly, the genres chosen for each volume, short fiction, poetry and microfiction, escape, to a certain extent, the norms of a canon inherited from Western or Eurocentric literary practices which would traditionally take the form of the novel.[657] The choice of the genres selected for *Los nuevos caníbales* may therefore be read as an attempt to bring to the fore literary forms that have long existed within the region but somehow, due to the asymmetrical processes of world-literature circulation, have been erased or marginalized due to the centripetal pull of the Greenwich meridian. In that sense, the re-appropriation of Caribbean specificities becomes a matter of

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[655] Pedro Antonio Valdez, 'Microcaníbales en Santo Domingo', *Los nuevos caníbales Volumen 3: Antología del microcuento del Caribe hispano*, ed. by Rafael Grillo, Pedro Antonio Valdez & Emilio del Carril (San Juan: Isla Negra Editores, La Habana: Ediciones Uníon, Santo Domingo: Editorial Búho, 2015), pp. 57–62 (p. 61).

[656] In his introduction to the Cuban section of the third *Nuevos caníbales*, Rafael Grillo comments on this particular point: 'En el contexto literario general (y no solo del minicuento), esta proporción es atinada porque son los nacidos en esas épocas quienes se van consolidando hoy en el núcleo de mayor madurez y visibilidad dentro de lo que pudiera considerarse como la hornada de esa "literatura cubana contemporánea" o "actual" que no llega aún al estamento de "lo canonizado"'. Rafael Grillo, 'Píldoras contra el insomnio hechas en Cuba', *Los nuevos caníbales Volumen 3: Antología del microcuento del Caribe hispano* ed. by Rafael Grillo, Pedro Antonio Valdez & Emilio del Carril (San Juan: Isla Negra Editores, La Habana: Ediciones Uníon, Santo Domingo: Editorial Búho, 2015), pp. 11–18 (p. 15).

[657] In his essay 'Dos textos en torno a la teoría del sistema-mundo', Franco Moretti takes the example of the naturalist novel and its diffusion across Latin America, highlighting the transformations the genre underwent when translated for a non European market: 'Hace años, uno de los grandes críticos de nuestro tiempo, Antonio Candido, escribío un tríptico de ensayos […], en los cuales sigue la difusión de la novela naturalista del centro (Francia), a través de la semiperiferia (Italia), y a la periferia (Brasil) del sistema mundo literario. Y descubrió, entre otras cosas, una extraña separación en el proceso de difusión: mientras el modelo de trama de Zolá fue en gran parte conservado por Verga y Azevego, su estilo fue profundamente transformado […].' Moretti, 'Dos textos en torno a la teoría del sistema-mundo', p. 53.

recovering a long-lost (or silenced) local canon as well as of a rewriting of History as Pedro Antonio Valdez observes in 'Microcaníbales en Santo Domingo':

> Como en todas partes, el microcuento existe en República Dominicana mucho antes de que el género existiera. Porque a esta expresión literaria le pasó lo que a América: que 'sólo empezó a existir' luego de que, ya vieja y poblada por civilizaciones centenarias, Cristóbal Colón junto a un puñado de ex presidiarios la 'descubriera'.[658]

It could be argued, then, that with such an initiative, the publisher embarks on the dismantling of some of the stereotypes traditionally associated with forms of authorization and canonization, whereby Europe is usually presented as *the* point of origin. In most cases, writers from the Greater Caribbean who access the global market, especially in translation, have generally gained some form of visibility through recognition in Europe (or North America), often symbolized by a prestigious prize that grants them a newly acquired literary status and places them within a certain discourse and lineage. By authorizing the heretofore unauthorized writers and placing them alongside previously 'salvaged' authors, *Los nuevos caníbales* in turn acknowledges former publishing enterprises that sought, in a vein similar to their own undertaking, to un-silence generations of non-affiliated, marginal voices.[659] In so doing they partake, at their own level, in the creation of new filiations for Caribbean literature.

7.2.3. Restoring silenced voices and muted echoes

El canon secuestrado is the publisher's second imprint that perhaps best illustrates this attempt at rehabilitating previously silenced or misheard voices. *La isla silente*, by Eduardo Lalo, epitomizes the hardships undergone by the then fairly unknown writer

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[658] Valdez, 'Microcaníbales en Santo Domingo', p. 57.

[659] 'En su revelador Prólogo introductorio, el antólogo José Ángel Rosado destaca las particularidades editoriales de realizar esta primera anti-antología de lo escondido y marginal, así como algunas de las características definitorias de la a veces llamada "generación soterrada" de los ochenta […]. Una de las aportaciones más significativas de este trabajo antológico fue llamar la atención sobre la existencia de una rica realidad literaria paralela y marginal, pero desconocida en los espacios públicos de la literatura institucional o canónica. Los textos de esta antología sólo existían esparcidos en los medios alternativos de difusión: revistas artesanales, pequeños grupos literarios, suplementos culturales y esporádicas editoriales accidentadas; pero por consiguiente, estaban ausentes del estudio y la reflexión teórica de la opinión de la crítica "autorizada".' Gómez Beras, 'Una ventana entreabierta', p. 192.

attempting to get his work published in Puerto Rico, as the blurb on the back cover of the book highlights:

> Los tres primeros libros de Eduardo Lalo han recorrido el laberinto de pequeñas y grandes editoriales, el olvido de la burocracia gubernamental y el azar de distribuciones accidentadas para volver a encontrarse en este volumen de La isla silente. La colección El canon secuestrado pocas veces ha encontrado una obra literaria que por su oficio, diversidad y calidad, represente mejor la urgencia de una palabra liberada.[660]

The publisher's agenda is made explicit in the paratextual apparatus that surrounds Lalo's publication, a feature that can be observed in the majority of books published in the imprint. The design on the book cover of *La isla silente* represents, for example, the details of a work of art made by the author himself ('*Patría I*, medio mixto y pigmento sobre madera, 2001') that reproduces a series of embossed letters and figures, that could be found on stamped or official documents and could therefore stand for the maze of governmental red tape, as suggested by the blurb on the back cover. The prologue by Yolanda Izquierdo could also be read as a statement of purpose for the imprint, stressing the need to rehabilitate a formerly silenced voice and to reintegrate a heretofore estranged author in his own 'home' country:

> Insisto en que acaso no sea fortuito el hecho de que estos textos hayan permanecido "secuestrados" de alguna manera hasta hoy, y celebro que mediante esta iniciativa de rescate de Isla Negra se incorporen a nuestro cannon, "al final del camino de luz", tras "la peor extranjería, la que se cifra en el propio país".[661]

In the case of Eduardo Lalo, however, it is interesting to note that his most recent books have been published with several local publishers, among which Editorial Tal Cual or Ediciones Callejón, and that *La isla silente* is in fact a re-edition of three of his earlier books compiled together around the *leitmotiv* of the city (*Ciudades e islas*, *Libro de textos* and *En el Burger King de la Calle San Francisco*). Similarly, an anthology of poems by María Arrillaga, *Ciudades como mares*, was published in *El canon secuestrado* and

[660] Eduardo Lalo, *La isla silente* (San Juan: Isla Negra Editores, 2002).
[661] *Ibid*., p. xvii.

connects local Caribbean topographies with global geographies, often taking the form of cities or animated, vibrant spaces – in *Ciudades e islas*, Lalo pays tribute to Baudelaire's Paris, for example, whilst Arrillaga navigates between the shores of her native island, Puerto Rico, and the city of New York. The re-edition of Pedro Pietri's *Puerto Rican obituary* in a bilingual volume by *Isla Negra Editores* further invites us to a reconfiguration of a Caribbean canon thought beyond national lines and across linguistic divides. In that instance, the bilingual presentation of Pietri's work on the publisher's webpage is particularly telling:

> Pedro Pietri is the author of many poetry collections and plays. His work has been translated into several languages, and has been hailed as one of the most original voices in the literature of the 20th century. His admonitory tone, spiced with a corrosive sense of humor and a taste for the grotesque, is above all a poetic chant to freedom. Pedro Pietri es el escritor emblemático de la diáspora puertorriqueña y uno de los autores más importantes de las letras contemporáneas. Ha sido traducido a varias lenguas, entre ellas el holandés y el indostaní, habiendo trascendido su obra y su nombre no sólo las barreras exclusivistas del canon literario estadounidense, sino del boricua por igual.[662]

The role of translation is acknowledged here as an instrument of transnational reading that not only transcends the borders of national visibility for a writer (whether they are located in the United States or in Puerto Rico), but also invites a perpetual redistribution of the circuits through which Caribbean literature should circulate – it is interesting to note that Pietri's work has been translated into Dutch or Hindustani, for example. It seems, furthermore, that, as Mayra Santos-Febres notes in her introduction to Willie Perdomo's poems: 'Cada poema se cuela en el canon de la literatura Nuyorican para impartirle una nueva vida'.[663] Thus, both Nuyorican poets Pietri and Perdomo are linked back to the Caribbean and the island of Puerto Rico in the two bilingual editions published by *Isla Negra Editores*, that, by highlighting transN/Lational echoes with other

[662] *Obituario puertorriqueño*, <http://www.editorialislanegra.com/index.php?page=shop.product_details&flypage=flypage.tpl&product_id=35&category_id=7&option=com_virtuemart&Itemid=7&vmcchk=1&Itemid=7 > [accessed 19 October 2016]

[663] Willie Perdomo, *Postcards of El Barrio*, trans. by Mayra Santos-Febres (San Juan: Isla Negra Editores, 2002), p. 59.

geographic and linguistic spaces, also stress the writers' reach beyond their original (somehow muted) scope of expression.

7.2.4. Thresholds of transversal readings

In its enterprise of revamping the Caribbean canon, *Isla Negra Editores* gives pride of place to the 'thresholds' of *Los nuevos caníbales* and *El canon secuestrado* to highlight their publishing strategy. As has already been noted in the case of *La isla silente* and the anthologies from *Los nuevos caníbales*, paratextual information ranging from book covers to prologues and introductory sections, as well as 'epitextual'[664] elements (found outside the bound book) become highly visible sites of destabilization, whereby traditional readings of canonization are deconstructed. This section would like to take the examples of *Puerto Rican Obituary* and *Postcards of el barrio* to show how a pan-Caribbean 'canon' may be redefined along transversal circuits of circulation to complexify otherwise local or bilateral understandings of the region's literary production (mostly in relation to a former or neo colonial centre). In both editions, which are bilingual, the original text by the author is introduced by the translator, and both versions can be read completely independently from each other, as the publisher did not opt for a parallel presentation of the poems, whereby one text would find its echo on the facing page. Furthermore, as has already been alluded to, both translations somehow erase the code-switching present in the initial texts, where Spanish words or phrases peppered the English. To a certain extent, Mayra Santos-Febres's Spanish version bears some traces of the original hybrid setting, as she decided, from time to time, to mirror some instances of code-switching in her translation:

"Coño, qué flaco", I say. "Look how skinny he is."	"Damn, how skinny", digo. "Mira lo flaco que está."
"Como tú, mantecoso", Mami says. "Just like you. You know why he's	"Como tú, mantecoso", Mami responde. "Igualito que tú. Tú sabes por

[664] Genette distinguishes 'peritext' (paratext found inside the object book) from 'epitext' (material from *Isla Negra*'s website, not present in the bound volume would belong to the latter category, for example).

like that, right? You know, right?"[665]	qué estaba así, ¿verdá? You know, right?"[666]

The absence of italics in both versions and the re-inscription of hybridity, even if only sporadically, through a mirror use of code-switching in the Spanish translation seem to corroborate here a point that the translator made in her prologue to the text on the author distanced himself from an earlier Nuyorican paradigm that consisted in dissociating an experience of Puertoricanness that would differ depending on where one lived (mainland US as opposed to on the island). Instead, Perdomo's text and its translation are presented as two creations that dialogue with other aesthetics of interconnected rhythms and universal experiences:

> Willie Perdomo's is not a poetry that dwells on the Nuyorican experience in confrontation neither with Island Puerto Rico nor with mainstream US. It is not about being Nuyorican, but written from the Nuyorican standpoint.
> Willie Perdomo fuses the Nuyorican aesthetics with other poetics – in particular with Langston Hughes. This enables him to work rhythms that combine the prose poem with variations of the blues.[667]

Similarly, the bilingual re-edition of Pietri's *Obituario* attempts to revise former readings of the text. It is particularly interesting, in that regard, to note that Alfredo Matilla Rivas's introduction to the English text is presented as a 'foreword', whilst his preliminary remarks to the Spanish, much more developed in terms of length and analysis, are introduced as a 'nota del traductor'. His work comes in fact closer to that of an editor ('se corrigen las erratas y se ponen al día las versiones al castellano'[668]), whilst offering a metatextual commentary on the act and role of translation as an instrument of perpetual re-writing and re-reading of a literary work:

> Con respecto a establecer un texto definitivo del *Obituario*, me parece tarea fútil, pues cada versión de una obra de Pietri es un texto avalado de una manera u otra por el propio autor. Por ejemplo: el texto

[665] Perdomo, *Postcards of El Barrio*, p. 51.
[666] *Ibid*., p. 100.
[667] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[668] Alfredo Matilla Rivas, 'Nota del traductor', in Pedro Pietri, *Puertorican Obituary/Obituario puertorriqueño,* 2nd edn (San Juan: Isla Negra Editores, 2006), p. 79.

> utilizado por Mario Maffi para su traducción al italiano del "Suicide Note from a Cockroach in a Low Income Housing Project" (en Scarafaggi metropolitani e altre poesie (Milano: Baldini & Castoldi, 1993), proporcionado por Pietri, muestra diferencias con la edición de Monthly Review Press, y con la del Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña: cada uno de estos textos es un cuerpo cambiante, y el mismo cuerpo. Es decir, una sola obra en continua evolución.[669]

The *Puerto Rican Obituary* then turns into an ode to archipelagic modes of publishing that comprise writers from the islands of the Greater Caribbean, authors from the region living in diaspora, but also from the world over who, when brought into dialogue with each other, offer a polyphony of transversal voices that can be heard in counterpoint to the set melody of any fixed literary canon.

7.3. From 'minor transnationalisms' to transN/Lational solidarities

In their co-editored volume on *Minor Transnationalism*, Lionnet and Shih explain that the 'transnational, therefore, is not bound by the binary of the local and the global and can occur in national, local, or global spaces, different and multiple spatialities and temporalities' (Lionnet and Shih, p. 6). Although this statement may be nuanced when it comes to the content of some of the texts published by *Isla Negra Editores*, in which the binary opposition between centre and periphery remains present, it will serve as a starting point from which to interrogate literary circulation within the Greater Caribbean. Can we observe, for instance, phenomena of transnational and translational (interlinguistic) movements of literary circulation within the region that do not entail transiting through 'global spaces'? To what extent does *Isla Negra Editores*'s work fit within those tendencies or, somehow, attempt (and potentially manage) to circumvent them? Ultimately, could a relational[670] model of literary circulation originating from the Greater Caribbean offer a constellation of multinodal re-configurations for alternative cultural production as well as diffusion?

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[669] *Ibid*., p. 80.

[670] Based on Glissant's *Poétique de la Relation*.

7.3.1. From ‘dependent independences’…

The title of this section is borrowed from a poem by Guillermo Rebollo Gil, ‘Proclamación de una dependencia independiente’, published in the second volume of *Los nuevos caníbales*. The text denounces Puerto Rico’s apathy towards its colonial situation and its ready acceptance of a capitalist model based on ostentatious mass consumerism:

puerto rico:

no queremos más sobras
de pensamientos recalentados
en el clima templado
de tu conciencia amorfa.
[…]
tú eres sólo un frente,
un cajón de ropa usada
de turtlenecks y de sweaters
porque siempre estás preparada
para las estaciones que nunca vienen,
para los comerciantes
de cerveza extranjera
con billboards flasheando riquezas.

por eso llevamos patria
en el tag del mahón
celebrando a levis, wrangler,
agüeybaná y betances,
a calvin klein y a colón.
porque nuestra cultura está a la venta
en plaza las américas
y j.c. penney tiene un 15 por ciento
de descuento en sábanas
para los clientes que perdieron su casa
con el paso de george,
toda esta semana.[671]

As has been shown, the literary market in the region features, in a similar fashion, a large percentage of international publishers in the Greater Caribbean, particularly when

[671] Guillermo Rebollo Gil, ‘Proclamación de una dependencia independiente’, *Los nuevos caníbales: antología de las más reciente poesía del Caribe hispano* (San Juan: Isla Negra Editores, La Habana: Ediciones Unión, Santo Domingo: Editorial Búho, 2003), pp. 250–251 (p. 250).

it comes to the circulation of works in translation. Taking the example of Jamaica, Alicia Roache, a reporter for the *Jamaica Observer*, wrote an article on self-publishing to reveal how local authors attempt to circumvent traditional modes of literary circulation. She noted: 'One of the challenges facing writers of fiction in Jamaica is that the majority of the publishers, approximately 95 per cent, are publishers of academic material. That means, if you are a fiction writer, your chances of being published via the traditional route are very limited. Tanya Batson-Savage, author of a collection of Jamaican children's stories, *Pumpkin Belly and Other Stories*, chose to self-publish in 2005, after realising just that. Not only were there few publishers of fiction locally, there were even fewer such publishers who were willing to take on a collection of children's stories.'[672] In the same way, some authors prefer to opt for self-publishing so that they can have more control over the creative and financial process, but can also gain higher visibility, particular when they wish to reach audiences outside the region, as short-run printing is usually favored by independent publishers.[673] Be that as it may, if the logic of globalization continues to hold sway in mainstream literary circulation in the Greater Caribbean as in most regions of the world, examples of transnational or 'minor' publishing, that is mostly represented by small presses, do offer alternative models to mass channels of cultural transfer.

7.3.2. …to unpredictable solidarities

As has been argued throughout this section, *Isla Negra Editores* fosters a collaborative approach to give access and visibility to new, emerging voices as well as to forgotten or denigrated texts. To do so, the publisher has not only maintained close relationships with local or regional partners, such as *Editora Buho*, based in Santo

[672] *The Jamaica Observer*, <http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/business/Local-writers-self-publish-to-crack-industry-barrier_7592263> [accessed 30 October 2016]

[673] Stefan Antonmattei (*Temporadas: una novela en tweets*, *Seasons: a Life in Tweets*, 2013), with whom I conducted an interview on 16 September 2016, chose self-publishing so that he could address both Anglophone and Hispanophone audiences, in the region as well as overseas. Similarly, Pedro Antonio Valdez notes that the publishing process in the Dominican Republic generally entails for an aspiring author to possess skills often required for a self-publishing author: 'El autor dominica suele ser además corrector de estilo, vendedor, distribuidor "A consignación" entre las librerías, mercadólogo y relacionista público de sí mismo. Es cierto que esto le permite tener un poder especial sobre el destino de sus obras. Pero se trata de un poder extraño, atípico, usurpado por necesidad.' *Los nuevos caníbales*, 2004, pp. 107–108.

Domingo, or *Ediciones Unión*, based in La Habana, they also have established and developed rather unexpected partnerships throughout the world. To a certain extent, *Isla Negra Editores* has acted as a focal point for transN/Lational publishing in and for the Greater Caribbean. Gómez Beras sold translation rights[674] for two books by a Puerto Rican writer to a Croatian publisher during his participation in the Frankfurt book fair in 2011 and 2014, and decided to incorporate non Caribbean literature into his catalogue. A collection of poems by László Deák, translated into Spanish as *A media voz, poesías escogidas* by María Teresa Reyes and Georges Ferdinandy, thus offers to the Hispanophone Caribbean reader a bilingual volume through which they can familiarize themselves with his work. One poem in particular, *Homenaje a Mark Twain/Hommage à Mark Twain*, illustrates how canonical texts by an author such as Twain may circulate in minor spaces of literary circulation without mediation by a cultural centre:

Homenaje a Mark Twain
Todos quedamos perplejos
si se trata de ellos: Tom, Huck,
Y Becky Thatcher.
Estamos confusos sin excepción.
Reaparece el Río, las aventuras,
pero no recuerdo
¿cómo fue exactamente?
Tú quedaste me fui yo
¿o fue al revés?
¿Dónde escondimos las canicas?
Entonces, sí, hicimos promesas,
ya las hemos olvidado
completamente.
Quedó el fino hilo de un sonido
entre la risa y el llanto,
el arrullo del Sur, polvoriento,
adormecedor
y la incertidumbre dolorosa

Hommage à Mark Twain
Mind szemlesütve állunk,
ha szóbakerülnek: Tom, Huck,
és Becky Thatcher.
Zavarba jövünk mindannyian
Felrémlik a Folyó, a kalandok,
de nem emlékszem,
hogy is volt pontasan?
Te maradtál, én jöttem el,
vagy éppen fordítva?
Hová rejtettak az üveggolyókat?
Akkor, igen, megfogadtuk –
elfeledtük azóta egészen.
Megmaradt a vékonyka hang
Sirás-nevetés határán,
az álmos, poros dél ringatása,
és a szívrepesztö bizonytalansäg
a lezáratlan, levegös horizonton.[676]

[674] 'A raíz de su participación en la Feria del Libro de Frankfurt, Isla Negra logra la venta de los derechos de autor al croata de dos libros de su catálogo, ambos por el fenecido académico y escritor puertorriqueño Juan Antonio Rodríguez Pagán, *El otro lado de El público de Lorca* y *Así que pasen 5 años: una propuesta surrealista de Lorca*, con los ánimos de la colega editora Sanja Janusic.' Serrata, 'Algo de la historia de Isla Negra Editores', p. 5.
[676] *Ibid*., p. 13.

en el horizonte sin fronteras, al
viento.[675]

The role of the translators is acknowledged on the back cover of the book as that of facilitating agents who bring Eastern European literature to Caribbean readers, an unexpected transversal route of circulation;[677] it could even be argued that they are given pride of place in this bilingual edition, since the Spanish version is placed on the left-hand side of the original, as if suggesting new modes of reading, in which the translation would not necessarily be considered as a derivative of the source text. All the same, others could interpret this type of reversed chronology between source and target texts as purely pragmatic, concerned as the publisher might be to ensure the reader's immediate access to the Spanish version. The poem still highlights a logic of literary circulation that takes up canonical texts and offers a hybrid reading of its reception in spaces considered as minor literary markets, illustrating what Lionnet and Shih define as '[t]he transnational, [which] can be conceived as a space of exchange and participation wherever processes of hybridization occur and where it is still possible for cultures to be produced and performed without necessary mediation by the center.' (Lionnet and Shih, 2005, p. 5). Those examples of unpredicted and unmediated expressions of solidarity between the Caribbean and peripheral spaces of cultural diffusion from Europe attest to forms of possible cultural transversalism in international literary circulation.

7.3.3. Generating alternative literary coordinates from the Caribbean

In his *Poétique de la Relation*, Edouard Glissant notes the baroque nature of Caribbean identity, highlighting its erratic, non-linear movements: '*[l']art baroque fait appel au contournement, à la prolifération, à la redondance d'espace, à ce qui bafoue l'unicité prétendue d'un connu et d'un connaissant, à ce qui exalte la quantité reprise infiniment, la totalité à l'infini recommencée*.'[678] In a similar vein, the epigraph opening

[675] Deák, *A media voz, poesías escogidas*, p. 12.
[677] The back cover of the book stresses this unexpected access to Eastern Europe: 'A través de esta excelente traducción de María Teresa Reyes y Georges Ferdinandy – este último, uno de los narradores húngaros más celebrados – accedemos a unas de las tradiciones literarias más ricas e interesantes de la Europa Oriental.' (Alberto Martínez-Márquez, Universidad de Puerto Rico, *Ibid*.).
[678] Glissant, *Poétique de la Relation*, p. 92.

this section attempted to introduce a space of reflection that foregrounds erring and *errance,*[679] understood here as the refusal of a set norm of literary circulation or standard forms of canonization, to potentially generate new cartographies of literary circuits within the Greater Caribbean as well as without. Eduardo Lalo's texts compiled in *La isla silente* refer, for many of them, to 'specific'[680] locations that yet blur exact geographical coordinates, whilst referring to known or easily identifiable spots on the map of the world. Such is the case of 'La Rochelle', from *Libro de textos*, in which the author redefines topographical realities, resituating them in space and time, beyond their historical and linguistic heritage to (re)connect them, instead, with other cities (or perhaps constellations) that celebrate life and the immediacy of the 'verbal' rather than the temporality of the 'written down' or the 'inscribed':

> Un primer significado: un puertorriqueño en La Rochelle es ubicarse lejos de lo conocido. Es no estar en ningún sitio, por estar en un punto que podría ser cualquier otro del mapa. […]
>
> Miro las luces de San Juan, una a una, simultáneamente. La ciudad no tiene historia, está viva. San Juan, un nombre, un punto en el mapa, podría llamarse así, quedar aquí o no. Es ésta la guerra entre historia y vida, porque todo el universo podría expresarse con decir La Rochelle.[681]

Similarly, Gómez Beras disrupts a traditional use of paratextual elements in his own poetry by privileging a relational understanding of writing and publishing Caribbean literature. On the inside flap of the dust jacket to *Errata de fe*, the poet is thus presented as being both born in the Dominican Republic and (re)born in Puerto Rico,[682] whilst both this collection of poems and his former one, *Mapa al corazón del hombre*, initiate new methods of reading conventional glossaries. Gómez Beras offers in fact 'glosario[s] de

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[679] 'Le langage tel que le conçoit Glissant offre la possibilité de cette errance qui, au terme du parcours, permet le retour vers une langue réappropriée, langue redevenue celle du fils par le détour vers son irréductible étrangeté. Cette langue dépossédée du poids de ses terreurs ataviques, riche de toutes les ruses assimilées, est seule capable de porter l'immense chant du monde.' Lise Gauvin, 'L'Imaginaire des langues: tracées d'une poétique', p. 280.

[680] Once again, the term is thought of in terms of Relation here, as defined by Peter Hallward (Hallward, 2001, p. xii).

[681] Lalo, *La isla silente*, pp. 111–112.

[682] 'Carlos Roberto Gómez Beras nació en República Dominica (1959) y (re)nació en Puerto Rico (1964).' Carlos Roberto Gómez Beras, *Errata de fe* (San Juan: Isla Negra Editores, 2016).

afectos' at the end of both collections, where he dedicates some of his poems to various persons, all addressed on a first-name basis, as if suggesting new coordinates of intimacy far removed from the usual impersonal list of terms expected in a glossary. Some may read in such a remapping of publishing practices a desire to express one's gratitude to esteemed collaborators and a certain sense of comradeship, whilst others may see it as poetic vision, a space of enunciation where both the otherworldliness of literary creations and the mundanity of publishing realities converge to ultimately create new cartographies of cultural exchanges. Regardless of how the reader chooses to interpret such practices, *Isla Negra Editores* remains a unique case study in the vast panorama of literary circulation in and for the Greater Caribbean. The publisher's catalogue testifies to a long-term commitment to lending visibility and voice to previously silenced or unseen authors, as well as to reaching pan-Caribbean readers (although mostly of a Hispanophone background). New canons therefore emerge against the tide of mainstream literary circuits, whilst new and ancient cannibals alike return from their wayward, erring journeys to continue disrupting the winds of westward meridians.

Conclusion: Caribbean literatures in translation, or when thresholds become ecotones

to every tortured geography

Not work, taut, deaf, monotonous as a sea, endlessly sculpted—but eruptions yielding to earth's effervescence—that expose the heart, beyond worry and anguishes, to a stridency of beaches—always dislocated, always recovered, and beyond completion—not works but matter itself through which the work navigates—attached to and quickly discarded by some plan—first cries, innocent rumors, tired forms—untimely witnesses to this endeavor—perfectly fusing as their imperfections meet—persuading one to stop at the uncertain—that which trembles, wavers, and ceaselessly becomes—like a devastated land—scattered.[683]

Not every threshold is meant to be crossed, at least not unknowingly or without raising a certain awareness of what is involved in the act of stepping forward and into. Reading Caribbean literatures – or any given literature, for that matter – requires a conscious self-positioning, as the process invites us to reflect on how and where from we consume cultural goods. The responsible, 'active'[684] reading promoted here goes hand in hand with equally informed acts of translation and methods of publication, as shown throughout this work. Whilst most of the chapters have focused on translational and paratextual strategies, they have also broadened the initial scope of textual analysis to the issues surrounding the circulation of Caribbean literatures, particularly when dealing with transregional and transoceanic crossings.

Chapter 1 introduced the threshold as a crucial notion for Caribbean and Translation Studies. Departing from the field of semiotics and the Genettian framework,

[683] Édouard Glissant, 'Riveted Blood', *The Collected Poems of Édouard Glissant*, ed. by Jeff Humphries, trans. by Jeff Humphries and Melissa Manolas (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), p. 5.

[684] The adjective echoes Dabydeen's stance against the passive consumption of third-world goods already mentioned in chapter two (see page 55).

it aimed at presenting liminality as a complementary approach, if not an alternative to the border/checkpoint model, by insisting on the domestic nature of the threshold. This method of analysis invited a reading of paratext as a site of entry into the text, but also as a site of porosity between text and that which is not part of the text.[685] However, the fine line traditionally drawn between authorial and translational prerogatives was shown to be blurry, which, in turn, raised concerns over acts of trespassing. When considering more specifically Caribbean literature aimed at Western readers, it seemed that the threshold also served the function of cultural enclave, whereby the region's idiosyncrasies were shown to resist normative attempts at homogenous, unequivocal transpositions. As such, it became apparent that a remapping of paratextual thresholds was necessary in order to assign renewed (af)filiations to the region. This point served as the guiding principle of chapter 2. As shown in this chapter, the threshold is a transitional space that implies the observance of specific rites of passage and is, as such, a highly ritualistic site. This is notably the case of prefaces in which a (usually) recognised writer or translator gives his or her credentials to the text. However, paratextual matter does not always necessarily entail a clarification of the text, as it may on the contrary insist on the text's resistance to transparency and promote, accordingly, opacity. The aim of this section was precisely to tease out the notion that paratext is necessarily there to illuminate the text. This may be the case of scholarly editions – although such a claim should also be qualified –, but it nonetheless remains that in various instances of autographic, and to some extent, allographic presentations[686] of translated Caribbean fiction, the thresholds of the text are rather aimed at deconstructing the idea of an unproblematic crossing. Here Glissant's concept of the *détour*, taken up by Chamoiseau, among others, has been particularly helpful to show how paratextual matter may reveal and obscure at once. What is at stake

[685] Richard Watts makes an interesting suggestion about distinguishing 'paratext' from 'para/text': 'To borrow a gesture from Chris Bongie, who marks the epistemic complicity between the colonial and the postcolonial through his use of the term "post/colonial", Lopes's and Glissant's writing in the margins of the book might be called "para/textual" interventions. Whereas the term "paratext" implies the possibility of separating this material from the "text" proper, the slash suggests the inextricable imbrication of the one in the other.' Richard Watts, *Packaging Post/Coloniality: The Manufacture of Literary Identity in the Francophone World* (Lanham, Oxford, Lexington Books: 2005), p. 135.

[686] Autographic presentations suggest that they have been done by the author him/herself; allographic presentations suggest the intervention of a third party.

in this dual understanding of the threshold is the possibility for Caribbean literatures to emerge, be circulated and understood as literatures that defy a normative understanding of translation. Whilst the title of the chapter explicitly referred to the possibility of 'authenticating' Caribbean literatures through various levels of (re)appropriation and (dis)location, most of which were considered from the margins of the text, it also suggested that the notion of 'authenticity'[687] remains highly elusive and should be invoked with great caution.[688] Yet, just as the notion of untranslatability was introduced to suggest that translation necessarily includes its paired sibling, paratextual matter attempting to provide a convincing representation of Caribbean realities similarly entails a reappraisal of traditional forms of endorsement.

In chapter 3, acts of non- or mistranslation (and the right thereof) reminded us of some of the most violent, deadly episodes that occurred in the Caribbean and focused particularly on Hispaniola's Parsley Massacre. Here the geopolitical border separating the Dominican Republic from Haiti became the site of a genocide perpetrated against those who could or would not conform to an imposed linguistic standard. By contrast, the thresholds of the texts under study were analysed as powerful sites of redemption, whereby heteroglossia and linguistic hybridity allowed for initial traumas to be re-covered and re-told thanks to a poetics of translation articulated around sutures. The aim here was to show that the threshold can be a valid mode of thinking translation as a site of hospitality, as long as it is refashioned around the concept of reciprocity and as long as 'host' and 'guest' cultures intermingle with each other, whilst maintaining their own specificities. Yet, the relatively low number of bilateral publishing initiatives observed in the Caribbean, despite some noteworthy communal efforts to move beyond linguistic and territorial heritages, continue to testify to the region's fragmentary nature. Caribbean literature is at times considered as a mosaic-like whole, with its various parts and pieces connecting and forming an identifiable overall pattern. At others, the emphasis is rather laid on the numerous tesserae that constitute the region and recall its internal splits and differences. These considerations speak to the difficulty of ascribing one overarching

[687] The vexed notion of 'authenticity' has been further discussed and criticized throughout the thesis.
[688] Hence the use of inverted commas around the term and its derivative forms in this work.

definition to the threshold in relation to the Caribbean, as it implies both the possibility of entering a guest or neighbour's home, but also and inevitably an act of crossing that cannot be guaranteed as it can be met with certain obstacles. In the context of literary circulation within the region, this entails, for example, the overcoming of linguistic, socio-historical and geopolitical divisions that have marked the Caribbean. As Rodney Saint-Éloi (*Mémoire d'encrier*) suggests when reflecting on possible intra-regional routes of circulation for Caribbean literature(s), it is the 'distance' separating islands and territories that first needs to be addressed:

> Des livres et une politique de circulation du livre dans la Caraïbe ? Oui, commençons par rompre la distance, pour mieux nous regarder, mieux lire dans le grand livre du tourment des mers et des origines, mieux fondre les émois dans des rêves d'avenir. Des livres caribéens, pour en finir avec la solitude îlienne, et pour être ensemble, projetés dans nos cris de guerriers de tous les imaginaires du monde, à l'assaut des citadelles.[689]

The distance invoked here refers to the archipelagic nature of the Caribbean, but also suggests that a decolonisation of the mind and of literary circulation (and diffusion) is still under way. Chapter 4 had the avowed purpose of dealing with this particular issue. It focused on Césaire's *Cahier* and several of its (re)translations and (re)editions, seeking to show how paratextual thresholds vary from one locale and one time period to another, and, as such, entail different cultural and ideological framings. The size of paratext, at times dwarfing the text itself, particularly in recent critical re-editions and retranslations of the poem, was further proof that the politics of translation continue to hold sway and that no literary text can be read unmediated. Although Césaire's poem had already been the object of several studies focusing on its (de/post)colonial paratext,[690] the emphasis of the chapter was on the organic nature of the text and aimed at offering an analysis of the poem and its many variations from the angle of genetic studies. This, in turn, privileged an understanding of translation as a process and not simply as an end result. The distinction between an authoritative original and its subservient derivative(s) was

[689] Rodney Saint-Éloi, 'Quelle politique de circulation du livre pour le bassin Caraïbe ?', *Caraïbes: Un monde à partager, Cultures Sud* 168 (2008), 270–281 (p. 280).
[690] See in particular Richard Watts's articles and monograph.

questioned, as Césaire's own rewritings of the poem showed a palimpsestic approach to literature.

This last point was further developed in the following section, in which cases of self-translation were brought to the fore. Here, the autoethnographic strategies deployed by Puerto Rican women writers Rosario Ferré and Esmeralda Santiago proved especially useful to show how translational thresholds can serve as sites of (self-)legitimation, on the one hand, but can also help (re)articulate the transcultural nature of Caribbeanness and Puertoricanness on the other hand. As argued here, paratextual thresholds cannot simply be classified as either colonial or postcolonial framings of a given text. Whereas they certainly offer an insight into the politics of translation, when it comes to Caribbean writing, they also reveal how the creative process is itself deeply imbued with a poetics of translation.[691] So much so that self-translation could be said to be an integral part of Caribbean writing, at least where writers who attune their works to non-regional, global audiences are concerned. In that regard, the erasure of the hybrid nature of some of the texts studied in the chapter, when later translated into a third language, is particularly striking, as it assigns a single origin to Caribbean writing when it was in fact initially presented as dual or bifocal. Similarly, the time-lapse separating one version from the other in the publication process, whereby both texts might have been written (more or less) simultaneously, but are made available to the public at distinct intervals, could also explain the reason why one variant of the text comes to be considered as the official one over the other. Bilingual or multilingual editions can offer an alternative, as they present several variations of a text within a single volume, although the layout and paratextual matter might once again either disrupt or conform to the idea of a chronology of writing

[691] Watts has also observed a similar strategy in Henri Lopes and Édouard Glissant's prefaces, although neither author self-translated their works *stricto sensu*: 'This shift, seen most dramatically in the paratextual practice of Glissant and Lopes, and especially in two recent books, unravels the logic of the hypertextual positioning and domination of the text historically enacted by the paratext. Both writers' paratexts break down the border between the inside and outside of the text. They also both go so far as to suggest, although perhaps one further than the other, that the border separating what has typically been the inside in this literary context – metropolitan French literature – from what has been cast as the outside – nonmetropolitan francophone literature – is now as obsolete as the sharp distinction between the inside and the outside of the text.' Watts, *Packaging Post/Coloniality: The Manufacture of Literary Identity in the Francophone World*, p. 121.

depending on where the emphasis is laid.[692] When taken all together, those factors indicate that in addition to the politics and poetics of translation, a third aspect should not be forgotten when examining the circulation of Caribbean literatures transnationally, namely the ethics of translation.

To that end, the last two chapters focused on alternative modes of circulation for Caribbean literatures. Whilst transversal and transoceanic theoretical frameworks have emerged from various peripheral spaces in the last decades and paved the way to rich and varied non-Western modalities of understanding and (re)assessing postcolonial literatures, including in the field of Translation Studies, when it comes to the scrutiny of the actual circulation and diffusion of so-called 'minor' literatures in translation, little has been done beyond strictly textual analyses or beyond national, regional or, at times, bilateral approaches to publishing strategies. As a result, chapter 6 focused on theoretical frameworks developed in other oceanic spaces (mostly in the Pacific and Indian oceans) to see how these models can dialogue with Caribbean thought, but perhaps more importantly how they can also lead to a concrete, pragmatic model of transversal publishing of peripheral literatures. In other words, can Caribbean literatures circulate archipelagically and do they? Such a question inevitably raises the issue of one's own positioning as a scholar based in the West. Although access to a wide range of texts in different languages has been made possible through the digitization and re-edition of (mostly) canonical Caribbean texts, which circulate fairly easily on a global scale, it is essential to note here that without field work conducted within the region itself, less visible texts and writers could not have been taken into account. Even when putting together a corpus that includes examples of commercial success and of critical recognition, that is even when considering smaller presses, as was the case particularly in Chapter 6, it nonetheless remains that certain titles and authors do not make it onto the thresholds of Western readers. Subliminal correspondences between forms of transoceanic creolizations had therefore to be envisaged. What resulted from this line of

[692] See once again the parallel presentation of Ferré's poems in *Language Duel*/*Duelo del Language* and how the 'supposed' chronological order of creation is disrupted from what can be inferred from the title page of the collection, as the poems in English (presented as 'translations') are in fact placed on the left-hand side of the Spanish versions.

research were some rare, yet possible crossovers, for example between indentureship as experienced, depicted and narrated in the West Indies and the Mascarene islands. Such correspondences were made possible through translational enterprises commissioned by either small or independent publishing structures, and were often carried out by either recognized writers (in the case of Ananda Devi), translators (in the case of Sika Fakambi) or scholars (for example Jean Anderson in the context of transnational Pacific writing). So much so that one could easily come to the conclusion that for Caribbean literatures to circulate in translation, a certain degree of visibility and/or endorsement is indeed required. Along the same line, it could be argued that only certain forms of Caribbean literatures manage to go beyond local audiences, depending on what is deemed 'authentic' and marketable for non-regional, global readers. But the same argument goes for small, independent publishers targeting readers 'at home'. If nothing else, the research conducted at *Isla Negra Editores* and presented in the final chapter of this work shows that there are indeed publishing structures that work on building intraregional bridges between the various literary practices observed in the Caribbean, but those initiatives remain overall too few and far between. In the case of *Isla Negra*, they mostly – although not entirely – focus on targeting Hispanophone readers, and, as such, leave out a considerable portion of the region's literary production. The dominant model of literary circulation within the region remains therefore mainly vertical and, as such, translating Caribbean literatures for a domestic, internal market usually entails going against the logics of mainstream publishing. As seen too with the example of the Puerto Rican publisher, an ethics of translation based on transversal acts of solidarity can further help move beyond certain established or canonical forms of literature, so as to generate, instead, new coordinates for the circulation of Caribbean voices. These coordinates are indeed crucial for the region at large, regardless of their colonial legacies. In the case of the Dutch islands, it seems to be a matter of extreme urgency against further isolation and even alienation from the 'mother country', sister islands and neighbouring territories altogether, as Arturo Desimone reminds us:

> Translation is necessary to reunite the 'ABC islands' with their neighbors and relatives and to end their condition of regional alienation without letting go their creole language. Translation, especially of poetry and intellectual works, into and from

> Papiamento can help the islands win against the deadly jargon of bureaucracies that render them back into the status originally designated for them by the first, Spanish colonizers' maps: *Islas inutiles*, Useless Islands, an invalid condition that resonates in the way later, modern authorities continue to regard these islands, their language unrecognized and unrecognizable, alienated.[693]

If translations are very much needed in the Caribbean to build a transnational repository of translocal and interregional literary practices, despite the exceptions already noted in chapter 7,[694] it seems that such endeavours can only come to fruition once the region's intricate and fragmented socio-economic, cultural, geographical, historical and linguistic realities are assessed and, in turn, addressed archipelagically. Caribbean cultural specificities and their literary representations could then be said to be fundamental, albeit fragile parts of an eco-system in which 'repeating islands' become 'repeating thresholds'[695] when it comes to literary translation. Although a sense of Caribbean fraternity and solidarity can be perceived in diverse cultural, institutional engagements and literary events organised throughout the region, it nevertheless remains that most literatures produced and circulated locally and trans-locally struggle to enter, let alone, cross the thresholds of their immediate neighbours. Those obstacles may be due to routes of circulation and diffusion that fall under the purview of international regulations that divide the Caribbean according to geopolitical and (neo)colonial rules. Be that as it may, on a pragmatic level, questions can still be addressed regarding a politics of translation that would take into account not only the various expectations of Caribbean readers in their diversity, but also the various and often fragile environments in which they experience literature, as Saint-Éloi once again reminds us:

> Quelles sont les pratiques de lecture existantes ? Y a-t-il dans ces bouts d'îles une préoccupation culturelle régionale ? La fragilité des conditions de vie laisse-t-elle place au livre ? […] L'accès au

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[693] See Arturo Desimone, 'The Divided Dutch Antillean Writer and the Unifying Force of Translation', *SX Salon* 23 (October 2016) <http://smallaxe.net/sxsalon/discussions/divided-dutch-antillean-writer-and-unifying-force-translation> [accessed 1 October 2017]

[694] I refer to the Cuban exception, here, more particularly. However, it should be noted that although Francophone and Anglophone Caribbean literatures have been translated by local (mostly Cuban) writers and translators and promoted by various institutions on the island, their circulation and diffusion beyond Cuba still needs to be assessed.

[695] In reference to Benítez-Rojo's concept of the 'repeating island'.

> livre et à la culture est-il égal ? Où regarde-t-on du côté des anciennes métropoles, de ces paysages dorés où on impose la consécration ? Les espaces littéraires exigus des principales îles de la Caraïbe ont-ils les moyens de lutter contre les stratégies commerciales des groupes occidentaux ? […] Si on dit Caraïbe, une dans sa multiplicité, l'un des traits d'unification serait la nécessité de traduire d'une île à l'autre. Alors, quelle est la politique de traduction à mettre en place pour que les livres circulent démocratiquement dans la région ?[696]

The politics of translation promoted here cannot be separated from an ethics of translation that also takes into account the realities of a landscape and an eco-system that is specific to the Caribbean. Although Saint-Éloi mainly focuses on islands in his line of argument, the Caribbean differs from other archipelagoes[697] in the very fact that it also incorporates continental territories, which further complexifies regional realities and exchanges. In that sense, the Caribbean could be considered as a complex eco-system or better yet as a series of eco-systems interconnected with each other by a variety of transitional areas known as ecotones. Although the ecotone shares most of the features attributed to the threshold already mentioned, namely the contact zone, the third space, transculturation, hybrid and composite identities, it should be added that it provides us with further (and necessary) insight into the concepts of vulnerability – through exposure to external, unexpected phenomena –, and resilience – through individual and collective action in the face of such contingencies. Glissant's opening lines of 'Riveted Blood' cited in the epigraph of the conclusion (p. 242) remind us that the Caribbean landscape is nothing but a 'tortured geography', that what might at first seem fixed and grounded is in reality in perpetual motion.[698] In his *Discours antillais*, Glissant already insisted on the fundamental role of the landscape, which is not simply part of the region's geographical

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[696] *Ibid*., p. 270.

[697] *Indianocéanie* comes to mind here, for example.

[698] Jeff Humphries, in his introduction to the collection of poems writes the following: '*Riveted Blood* suggests immobility, and yet even dried blood remains mutable and organic. While the poem may appear to be fixed or "riveted" in place, it is a natural phenomenon, and its meanings and allusions, its very substance, are always shifting in motion—exactly, in Glissant's view, like History, which is always moving and changing even though it is in the past; *what is past is never finished*, what is done is never complete, what has been lost is always present, and the apparently fixed events of History are subsumed in a perpetual dance of changes'. Édouard Glissant, *The Collected Poems of Édouard Glissant*, ed. by Jeff Humphries, trans. by Jeff Humphries and Melissa Manolas pp. xi–xxxiv (p. xxv).

background, but plays an active role as an agent of resistance in the making of Caribbean histories. Furthermore, as argued throughout this work, the situatedness of language is key to understanding Caribbean literatures in their specificities, all the more so when they are read in translation. As Michael Cronin argues about (indigenous) languages: '[t]he landscape and the tongue become one in a topography of possession and dispossession.'[699] Relating[700] one Caribbean space to another through translation would thus mean taking into account the resilience not only of one Caribbean location, but of two or more, depending on the number of languages present in the interstices of the text considered 'in translation' and its subsequent variations when travelling to its receiving cultures. In his translation ecology, Cronin makes a compelling case for a theory and practice of translation that integrates opacity as a form of resilience in the face of an 'easy' global consumption of cultural goods.[701] Similarly, this work has argued for a poetics of translation relying on opacity and creolization. Whilst much still needs to be done, on a pragmatic level, both locally and trans-locally[702], for Caribbean literatures to circulate 'in translation' – that is, once again, as fluctuating, organic processes of translation and not as 'translated' end products – this work has persistently pursued a 'post-pessimistic'[703] line of thought. Bearing in mind the challenges posed to the region by the various forces at work still preventing fairer and wider dissemination of local sensibilities and literary expressions, it has nonetheless argued for a sustainable future for Caribbean literatures, based on the evidence of past and ongoing acts of transcultural solidarity and expressions of a sheer concern to save Caribbean ecologies. So long as borders becomes thresholds

[699] Michael Cronin, *Eco-Translation: Translation and Ecology in the Age of the Anthropocene* (London, New York: Routledge, 2017, p. 123.

[700] As in 'relatedness' here. See Glissant's *Poétique de la Relation* once again.

[701] See in particular his reference to Emily Apter's *Against World Literature* and the role that untranslatability can play in the promotion of an ecology of translation: 'The untranslatable becomes a way of thinking about the specificity of languages and cultures, a call to attend to the singularity of written expression in particular places at particular times.' Cronin, p. 17.

[702] Again, here the concept of 'minor transnationalism' developed by Lionnet and Shih comes to mind. The 'trans-local' as articulated in chapters 6 and 7 does not negate the 'global', but tries, instead, to renegotiate some of its identified limits, by privileging a fractal or archipelagic model (rather than linear, which, whether it is vertical or horizontal, involves either a centre or a teleology).

[703] In reference to Kwame Anthony Appiah's 'post-optimism' when referring to postcolonialism and postmodernity. See Kwame Anthony Appiah 'Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonialism?', *Critical Inquiry*, 17, 2 (1991), 336–357.

and, in turn, thresholds become ecotones, Caribbean literatures, as fragile as they might be in their unique, intricate diversity, continue to attest to the untranslatability of translation and to the unthinkability of a ‘post-Caribbean’ world.

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APPENDIX

Quand le lwa
Lègbá
entre dans le hounfó
le tambour
dégouline
de pleurs
de gouttes de pluie
de chants

ÇA ÇA N'EST PAS ASSEZ

Ça n'est pas assez d'être affranchi
du rouge du blanc et du bleu
du drag, du dragon...

ÇA ÇA N'EST PAS ASSEZ

Ça n'est pas assez d'être affranchi
du fouet, des principautés et des potentats
où est ton royaume du Mot ?

ÇA ÇA N'EST PAS ASSEZ

ça n'est pas assez d'être affranchi
des fièvres paludéennes, peur de l'ouragan,
peur des invasions, sécheresse sur les récoltes, cloques
de feu sur la canne

ÇA ÇA N'EST PAS ASSEZ

Ça n'est pas assez
de tinter de trimer sur un carillon de bicyclette
quand l'enfer
crépite et crame sur l'écran quatorze pouces du très jap
du très jap du très japonais poste de télé-
vision importé United-Fruit-Company
à vente forcée, à force verve, rhinocé-
rocement noueux, cancéreusement tubulaire

ÇA ÇA N'EST PAS ASSEZ

ça n'est pas assez de pouvoir s'envoler vers Miami,
édifier des gratte-ciel, excaver le pays-
age lunaire des plages de sable pour bâtir
hôtels, casinos, sépulcres

Negre / Kaiso Berthelot / Traduit par Nita Eskarde
Negre, et « Rebellion », Orlando, Oxford University Press, London, 1969

ÇA N'EST PAS ASSEZ

ça n'est pas assez d'être affranchi
de bouter les squatters de Dieu hors de leurs litanies,
hors de leurs reliques
hors de leurs tombeaux de tambours

Ça n'est pas assez
d'implorer les banquiers de la Barclays au téléphone
Jésus-Christ par la radio à ondes courtes
les marines états-uniens en secouant tes hanches
osseuses

ÇA ÇA N'EST PAS ASSEZ

JE

dois recevoir le don des mots pour modeler mon nom
sur les syllabes des arbres

JE

dois recevoir le don des mots pour refaçonner les avenirs
comme une main de guérisseur

JE

dois recevoir le don des mots afin que les abeilles
dans le sang de mon cerveau vrombissant de mémoire

fassent les fleurs, fassent les volées d'oiseaux,
fassent le ciel, fassent les cieux,
les cieux ouverts au tonnerre au volcan à la terre qui se dé-
ploie

ÇA ÇA N'EST PAS

ÇA ÇA N'EST PAS ASSEZ

ça n'est pas assez
d'être arrêt, d'être béance
d'être vide, d'être coi
d'être point-virgule, semi-colonie ;

lance-moi la pierre
qui confondra le vide
trouve-moi la rage
et je raserai la colonie
comble-moi de mots

ÇA ÇA ÇA ÇA

et j'aveuglerai ton Dieu.

Att
Att
Attibon

Attibon Lègbá
Attibon Lègbá
Ouvri bayi pou' moi

Attibon Lègbá